OUR AMERICAN CENTURY

100 Years of Hollywood

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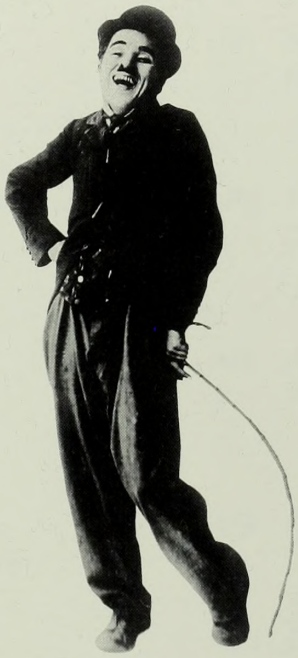
100 Years of Hollywood



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Lauren Bacall

Cultivating Fantasy: Movies and Their Stars

From the earliest years to the present, the movies have traded on people's appetite for fantasy. Always a key to the industry's success, the making of dreams reached its peak in the "golden age" of Hollywood, the era between the 1920s and the late 1940s when the big studios held unchallenged power over stars and directors and their movies enjoyed an unrivaled hold on the public's imagination. Moviegoing then was such a way of life that during an average week in 1938, America's population of 120 million bought 80 million movie tickets.

Audiences were drawn to particular films primarily because of the stars featured in them. And the stars' appeal was fueled by ubiquitous publicity photographs gazing out from magazine covers and movie posters, the faces entirely familiar but still impossibly, irresistibly romantic.

Star portraits were a specialized form of Hollywood art. Studio photographers like the renowned George Hurrell adopted a dramatic lighting style that set their subjects brilliantly aglow against a background of shadow. The effect transformed already beautiful men and women into icons. Like the stars shown on these pages, some radiated elegance, others had a wise-guy swagger, still others an all-American appeal. Sometimes they were simply breathtakingly gorgeous, but always they seemed larger than life.

Lauren Bacall, at right, represented the very stuff of such fantasy. At age 20, the former Betty Joan Perske made her film debut opposite Humphrey Bogart in 1944's *To Have and Have Not,* creating an instant sensation with her striking looks, husky voice, and tough charm. This 1946 publicity portrait for *The Big Sleep,* which again paired the two stars, conveyed the film's hard-boiled flair and Bacall's own distinctive magnetism while stoking the public's fascination with her recent marriage to Bogart. To the studio publicity machines, the stars' real lives were additional fodder for fantasy.

For decades the great studios made an art of cultivating star appeal, but their days of absolute power could not last. Television began competing for viewers. A new crop of actors and directors demanded and got more control over their own careers. A trend toward greater realism sent moviemakers off studio lots and out on location. Yet through these and all the other changes of its first 100 years, Hollywood has remained the film capital of the world, and its movies and stars retain their power to fascinate.

Joan Crawford

Gary Cooper

John Barrymore

Johnny Weissmuller

Greta Garbo

Cary Grant

Veronica Lake

James Cagney

The Birth of American Film

★

PHOTOGRAPHS SPRING TO LIFE

In 1896 a short motion picture of waves crashing onto a beach debuted at a New York music hall—and viewers in the front rows squirmed at the prospect of being drenched. An audience in Paris panicked and fled as the screen filled with the image of an onrushing locomotive. The mixture of reality and illusion produced by photographs that suddenly became moving pictures contained a potent magic. The pioneers who understood that magic best made movies into an instant industry.

From humble beginnings in "peep-show" machines, motion pictures took only about two decades to evolve into complex, feature-length spectacles shown in palatial theaters seating thousands. In the eyes of ordinary moviegoers and critics the cinema rapidly came into its own as a distinct form of art. And while this growth was taking place, film production migrated from the East Coast to southern California, where the climate let dream factories run year round.

Appearing almost as quickly as the films themselves, movie magazines let fans read all about Hollywood's emerging nobility: stars like lovely Mae Murray, adorning a 1924 magazine *(inset)*, or smoldering Rudolph Valentino *(left, foreground)*; moguls such as MGM's Louis B. Mayer or Paramount's Adolph Zukor; and brilliant directors like D. W. Griffith. By the early 1920s movies had become America's fifth most lucrative industry.

A pith-helmeted production crew shoots a scene for the 1921 desert epic The Sheik. In costume for the title role, silent-era heartthrob Rudolph Valentino awaits his turn in front of the camera.

A [illegible] and a [illegible] in [illegible]. The [illegible] tree part of a short-lived attempt to provide [illegible], though unconcentrated, sound.

East Coast Origins

In 1888 the New Jersey laboratory of America's leading inventor, Thomas Alva Edison *(below, right)*, developed the kinetograph, the world's first motion-picture camera. Though Edison got the credit, the invention was primarily the work of one of his assistants, W. K. Laurie Dickson.

Six years later the Edison Company introduced another marvel—the kinetoscope *(left)*, the first commercial system for showing motion pictures. To use the boxlike contraption, a customer put in a penny, gazed through a viewer, and watched some postage stamp-size action play out as a 50-foot loop of film unrolled over a period of a few seconds.

The content of the films was as rudimentary as the peep-show machine itself: Pretty women danced, terriers worried rats, trains rushed by, and contortionists twisted into knots. Viewers, however, were stunned and delighted at the experience of seeing still photographs erupt into motion. Kinetoscopes quickly began operating in arcades, bars, and stores throughout North America and Europe.

> "If we make this screen machine that you are asking for, it will spoil everything."
>
> Thomas Edison, arguing against the development of a motion-picture projector

The obvious next step was to liberate motion pictures from their tiny existence in the box and project them large on a screen. Edison at first did not approve, believing that one-at-a-time viewing meant bigger profits. But in 1896 he introduced a projector called the vitascope. (He had acquired it from its creator, Thomas Armat, who went unnoticed as Edison, again, accepted praise for someone else's work.) The vitascope was an instant hit, and soon audiences were gathering before screens in makeshift theaters across the land.

Having patented all these devices, Edison hoped to control the world of cinema. But some filmmakers and exhibitors defied him by using cameras and projectors imported from Europe, where he had not registered his

In an 1896 Edison film, May Irwin and John Rice reenact a scene from a stage play, creating a cinematic first and sparking moral indignation.

Thomas Edison (above, in 1889) was as ferocious in business as he was ingenious in the lab, spending big money to enforce his patents.

AMERICAN
MUTOSCOPE
& BIOGRAPH Co.
841 BROADWAY, N.Y.
American Mutosope & Biograph Co.
841 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

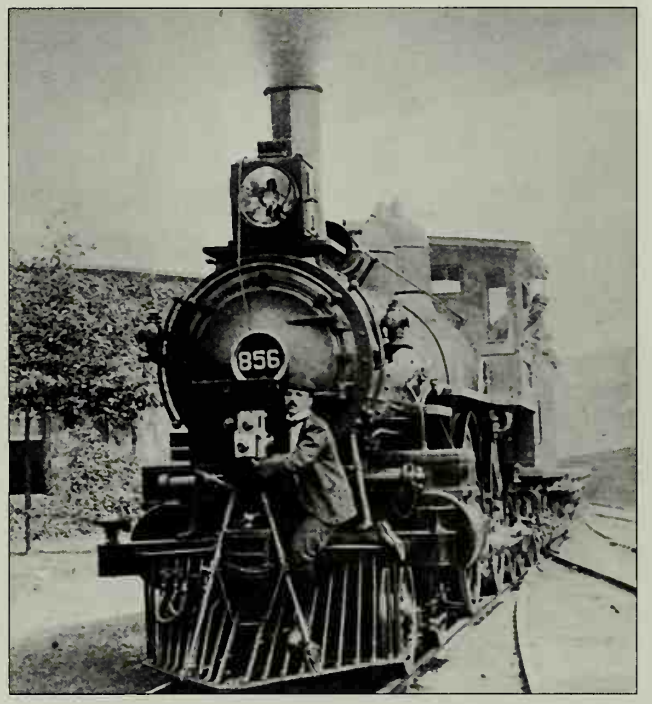
patents. Meanwhile, a rival system emerged. Since Edison's patents were based on the sprocket holes in motion-picture film, an outfit called the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company devised a camera that used unperforated film.

Edison filed suit, but the courts sided with Biograph, which then suggested a partnership. In 1908 Edison, Biograph, and several other companies joined forces as a would-be monopoly, the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC). They attempted to close down every studio, distributor, and exhibitor that refused to honor their patents by paying licensing and other fees. They also sent thugs to steal the negatives or destroy the cameras of maverick studios.

But the independents proved more resourceful. They fought the Edison trust in court. They also headed for southern California, which got them away from the trust's patent enforcers back east and offered better weather. In the end, the independents won: The U.S. government filed a successful antitrust suit against the MPPC in 1912.

Even before most studios relocated to the obscure Los Angeles community called Hollywood, another big change was taking place in the industry—the birth of the star system. Biograph's top attraction was a comely young woman known to the public only as the Biograph Girl. Like other studios, Biograph was leery of giving its actors and actresses the financial leverage that would come with celebrity. In 1910 newspapers reported that the Biograph Girl had died in a streetcar accident. In fact, she had been lured away by the rival Independent Motion Picture Company, run by budding mogul Carl Laemmle, who most likely dreamed up and circulated the story of her death himself—possibly filmdom's first instance of a planted publicity item. Laemmle then ran advertisements blasting the lie "circulated by enemies" of his company, revealed his new player's identity as Florence Lawrence, and reaped enough publicity to make her a household name. The era of anonymous actors was ending; from now on there would be movie stars.

When Florence Lawrence (above) was the Biograph Girl, a review praised her acting but lamented, "We do not know the lady's name."



Billy Bitzer (above), one of the first masters of cinematography, uses a Biograph camera to take footage from a moving train in 1898.

A Biograph crew (left) prepares to film an 1899 match between boxers Jim Jeffries and Tom Sharkey. Fights were a popular film subject.

Scenes from The Great Train Robbery, directed by Edwin S. Porter, include (from top) two bandits threatening the depot agent; the robbers fleeing with their loot; and, in a thrilling if inexplicable final note, a character firing his pistol at the audience. Some audiences saw the film in a version hand tinted with bright colors.

Nickel Madness

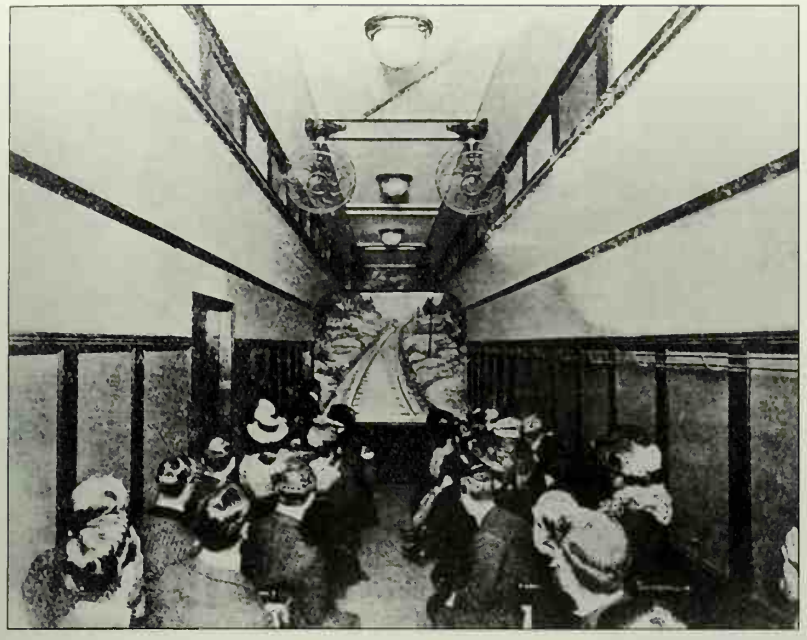
As late as 1908 the average movie was just one reel long. A reel contained about a thousand feet of film that was good for 10 to 12 minutes' running time, cost a few hundred dollars to produce, and was shot in a single day. But if films were still brief, they had grown more sophisticated in both plot and technique.

The first clear sign of the new medium's storytelling potential was a 10-minute microepic titled *The Great Train Robbery (left)*, a western shot in urban New Jersey. Made for the Edison Company in 1903, it offered something new in film, a suspenseful drama that was played out in a series of tightly knit scenes: the holdup, a chase, a dance hall episode, and an escape. At the first showing, viewers were so caught up in the tale that some of them yelled, "Catch 'em! Catch 'em!" as the thieves fled. Afterward the audience demanded that the projectionist run it again. Within five years the film brought in a staggering two million dollars in profits.

With such rewards beckoning, the movie business drew entrepreneurs of every stripe. In Kansas City, former fire chief George Hale created a new type of theater in 1904. The audience, seated in a replica of a railroad car *(near right, top)*, watched travelogues that had been shot from an actual train. The concept of illusory railway journeys, dubbed Hale's Tours, became franchised internationally *(far right, top)*.

Movie exhibitors soon struck pay dirt with other variations of the nickelodeon, so named because admission initially cost five cents. Nickelodeons occupied every sort of space, from cramped shops to ballrooms. Customers were mostly working class, and they loved what their nickel bought—a few short films with piano accompaniment, often interspersed with vaudeville acts, songs, or lectures.

Nickelodeons quickly became a national mania—"nickel madness," one observer called it. By 1907 there were more than 3,000 of the rough-and-ready theaters across the country, and average daily attendance had soared to the two million mark.



Seated in a Hale's Tours theater built to resemble a Pullman car (left), an audience takes a virtual trip by watching a film that replicates the view from a train. Such make-believe journeys were popular as far afield as London (above). To add to the illusion, the theaters were sometimes equipped with machinery that mimicked the noise and swaying motions of a real train ride.

A magistrate assailed nickelodeons as "dens of iniquity," but the baby carriages outside this theater suggest that some upstanding ladies disagreed.

Key figures in building Paramount Pictures Corporation were Adolph Zukor, seen above as a 23-year-old furrier; Jesse Lasky, who performed in vaudeville with his sister Blanche (below) before becoming a producer; and Samuel Goldfish (right), later Goldwyn, who had been a glove salesman but, after marrying Blanche, helped form the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company.

The First Moguls

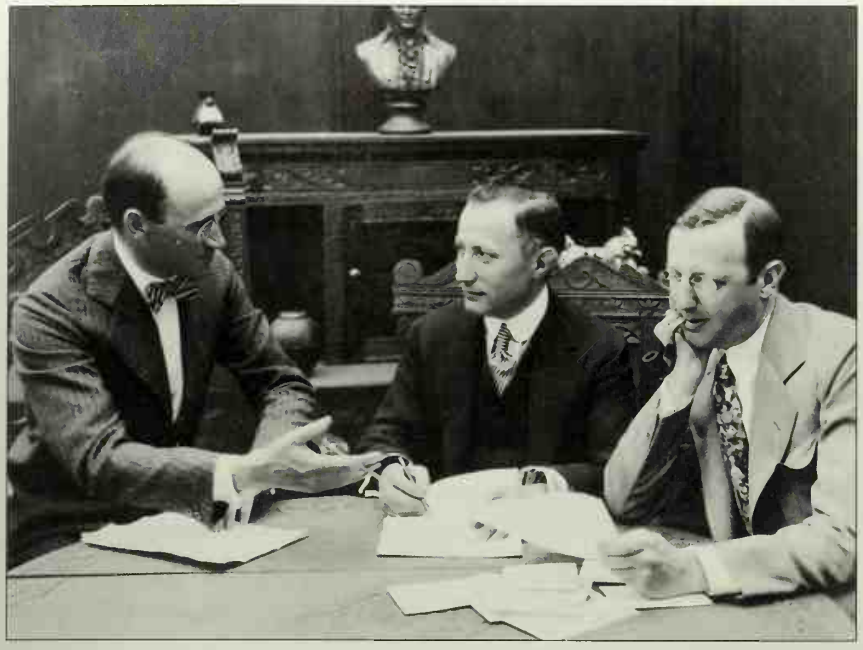
During the second decade of the 20th century, a handful of entrepreneurs pushed aside Edison and his allies to conquer the motion-picture industry. They were ambitious, hard-charging Jewish immigrants or sons of immigrants who started by running nickelodeons, then followed the golden vein to its source—the movies themselves.

These were street-smart men attuned to the dreams of the working-class Americans who made up their first audiences. They saw the new medium's possibilities before anyone else did. The film industry had been open to them in part because it was considered a slightly disreputable novelty business. What they now wanted was to achieve culture as well as profit. They perceived that this meant moving away from the kinds of cheap one-reelers the Edison trust turned out. Paramount chief Adolph Zukor said of the trust, "They put some brains into their mechanical devices and into their sales department, but never by any chance into their films."

Under these moguls, studios acquired stables of producers, directors, writers, and stars. Production moved to balmy California, films became longer and better, and theaters grew bigger and more luxurious. It was a time of rapid evolution, steered by risktakers who started small but thought very, very big.

Paramount Pictures. Adolph Zukor was a 15-year-old orphan when he left Hungary for New York in 1888. He made good, first in furs, then in nickelodeons. But despite his success with the movies, he recalled, "These short films, one-reelers or less, didn't give me the feeling that this was something that was going to be permanent."

In 1912 Zukor bought distribution rights to a four-reel French film, *Queen Elizabeth,* starring stage legend Sarah Bernhardt. It was a success, showing that there was a market for sophisticated, feature-length movies. Since the Edison trust insisted the "time is not ripe for feature pictures, if it ever will be," Zukor chose to join the ranks of independent filmmakers, establishing a studio that he called, hopefully, the Famous Players Film Company. For distribution, he signed up with an outfit called Paramount.



"[His] mind works with all the swiftness and certainty of the mind of a Napoleon."

Newspaper description of Adolph Zukor, 1912

Left: Sam Goldfish, Adolph Zukor, and Jesse Lasky confer in 1916. Below: Gunplay looms in The Squaw Man, Lasky's first film. The director, Cecil B. DeMille, reported death threats from the Edison trust and kept a revolver and a pet wolf on location.

His attention on business even during meals, mogul William Fox (left) slept little and would often work for 24 hours at a stretch.

In 1916 Zukor merged his studio with the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company—whose 1914 hit *The Squaw Man* was the first feature-length western made in Hollywood and marked the debut of director Cecil B. DeMille. Zukor soon clashed with and forced out Lasky's brother-in-law and partner, Samuel Goldfish, winning control first of the studio and then of the distributor, Paramount.

Under the overall name Paramount, Zukor built the nation's largest movie company. One acquaintance called him "the shark, the killer." He dominated almost all the other early moguls—and then outlived them, going into the office every morning until his final years and dying in 1976 at 103.

Fox. The brash, overbearing, and indefatigable founder of the Fox Film Corporation was William Fox, the oldest of 13 children of Hungarian immigrants. He had to leave school at age 11 to support the family, since his hard-drinking father did not, and when the elder Fox died, William spat on his coffin. In 1903, when he was 24, he and a friend bought a penny arcade. It proved so lucrative that thereafter he trained all his energies on the entertainment business.

Fox went on to buy and build fancy theaters designed to expand the appeal of movies beyond working-class audiences. He also, in 1914, embarked on film production. His studio put out dozens of westerns starring cowboy Tom Mix. Another big box-office draw for Fox was Theda Bara *(left)*, the original vamp, who steamed up the screen with a predatory eroticism. As the studio's success grew, so did Fox's ambition. According to his biographer, the novelist Upton Sinclair, Fox, like a latter-day Edison, "planned to get all the moving picture theaters in the United States under his control . . .

Fox star Theda Bara, in risqué costume for the 1917 film Cleopatra, played alluring sirens who seduced men, then destroyed them.

I think also that he planned to have the making of motion pictures entirely in his own hands."

But in 1929 Fox overreached. He took out colossal loans to acquire another big movie company, Loew's Inc., and its Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. Just as negotiations were closing, Fox was gravely injured in an auto accident and did not recover for three months. Meanwhile, three ruinous things happened: The Justice Department decided that a merger of the two studios would violate antitrust law, the stock market crashed, and Fox's loans came due. He lost his shot at MGM as well as control of his own company.

Universal. The man who established Universal Pictures was already middle-aged before he encountered much success in life. Carl Laemmle had come to America from Germany as a teenager and for many years went from one lowly job to another. He finally rose to manager of a clothing store in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, but then he quarreled with the owner and, at 40, found himself jobless again.

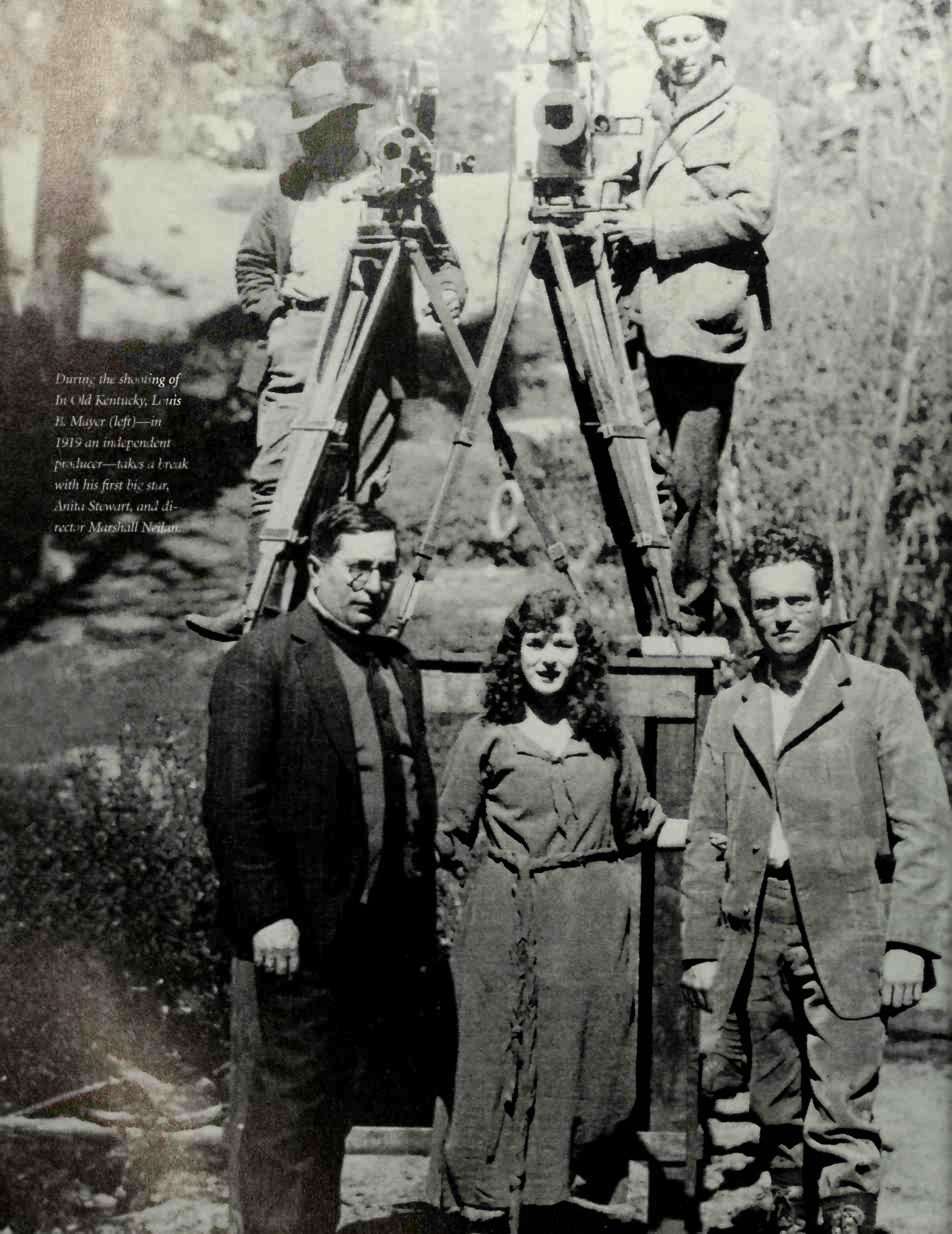
One night in Chicago, however, he discovered his true calling. "I dropped into one of those hole-in-the-wall five-cent motion picture theaters," Laemmle later remembered. "The pictures made me laugh, though they were very short and the projection jumpy. I liked them, and so did everybody else. I knew right away that I wanted to go into the motion picture business."

In 1906 Laemmle started a company that rented films to exhibitors. When the formation of the Edison trust in 1908 threatened to ruin him, he decided to begin producing his own films, forming the Independent Motion Picture Company—IMP, for short. Laemmle proved to be the most feisty of the independents, lambasting Edison's group in a vigorous advertising campaign while fighting off 289 separate legal actions it filed against him. Meanwhile he enticed "Biograph Girl" Florence Lawrence to join IMP—and then lured her replacement at Biograph, young Mary Pickford.

In 1912 Laemmle merged his studio with several others to form Universal, then drove off his new partners to gain full control of the company. Universal was successful from

Carl Laemmle—known to everyone at Universal as Uncle Carl—had a lighthearted manner but was a fierce business competitor.

Universal executives publicized the 1915 opening of their new California studio by arriving from the East on this banner-draped train.



During the shooting of In Old Kentucky, Louis B. Mayer (left)—in 1919 an independent producer—takes a break with his first big star, Anita Stewart, and director Marshall Neilan.

the beginning, and in 1915 it established a state-of-the-art studio north of Hollywood. Sprawling over 230 acres, Universal City was large enough to be granted its own post office and voting precinct. Without question, Carl Laemmle had taken his place among the studio moguls.

MGM. Like the other big studios, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was the product of the moguls' compulsion to take over rival companies. MGM's dominant force was Marcus Loew, who had been born into poverty on New York's Lower East Side. Ambition to achieve his goal was a byword for Loew. "You must be as ravenous to reach it," he said, "as the wolf who licks his teeth behind a fleeing rabbit."

As a young man Loew joined fellow furrier Adolph Zukor in running penny arcades, then in 1904 launched what grew to be a mighty chain of theaters. To increase the supply of high-quality films, he decided to go into movie production himself.

The second key figure at MGM was Louis B. Mayer. An immigrant from Russia, Mayer got his start in the movie business by converting a run-down Massachusetts burlesque house into a handsome cinema. In 1915 he helped form Metro Pictures Corporation, then left for California and began making films on his own. Mayer became a Hollywood legend: so sentimental that *Lassie* made him weep; so foul-tempered that he more than once punched a star in the snoot; so given to pomp and excess that he declared the Fourth of July his own birthday, claiming he could not remember his exact birthday back in Russia, and every year led all of MGM in a massive celebration—whether primarily of America's birthday or his own was never certain.

Completing MGM's pedigree was the irrepressible Samuel Goldfish, who had gone on from Famous Players-Lasky to start a new studio in 1916. He and his partner, Edgar Selwyn, combined their last names to call it the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, and Goldfish liked the name so well that he gave it to himself. Although he built up an impressive roster of talent at Goldwyn Pictures, he was forced out of that company as well, and he spent the rest of his career as an independent producer, famous for films such as *Wuthering Heights* and *The Pride of the Yankees* —and for such mangled metaphors, dubbed Goldwynisms, as accusing

Theater magnate Marcus Loew was a superb manager, whose operations one journalist likened to "the maneuvers of a crack army division."

The sleepy look of Metro's front office in 1918—and its coming years of box-office torpor—belie the studio's eventual destiny as part of moviemaking giant Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

From left to right, Harry, Jack, Sam, and Abe Warner line up for the camera—but were rarely aligned in life.

directors of "biting the hand that laid the golden egg" and nixing a project with "Include me out!"

In 1919 Loew purchased Metro Pictures Corporation. Five years later he folded in Goldwyn Pictures and made Mayer head of filmmaking operations for the huge new studio, soon renamed Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. In 1927 Loew died of heart disease, before the studio reached its glory days. But Mayer went on to make MGM Hollywood's most prestigious film studio.

With leading man John Barrymore seated in the center, the cast of Don Juan—the 1926 Warner Bros. film that pioneered the use of sound in the movies—assembles for a celebratory portrait.

Warner Bros. There was often little brotherly love among Harry, Abe, Sam, and Jack Warner. The four sons of a Polish immigrant first decided to try the motion-picture business in 1903. They showed films in a tent in their Youngstown, Ohio, backyard, then opened a nickelodeon where Harry and Abe sold tickets, Sam cranked the projector, and Jack sang between screenings.

They ventured into film distribution, but the Edison trust forced them out of business, so in 1910 they began producing inexpensive movies. Profits were often elusive, but the brothers refused to throw in the towel, and after 15 years of scrambling they had accumulated enough capital to try a revolutionary breakthrough—melding film with synchronized sound. They obtained the major rights to a system called Vitaphone and used it in a 1926 John Barrymore feature, *Don Juan.* Although the movie had no talk, just music and sound effects, the audience was amazed.

The following year, the Warners included fragments of dialogue in *The Jazz Singer,* starring Al Jolson. Harry reportedly had doubts; "Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?" he said. But the movie proved a sensation. Warner Bros. Pictures rapidly built itself into a giant.

But as success arrived, what little fraternal harmony there was disappeared. The day before *The Jazz Singer* debuted, Sam, the family mediator, suddenly died. Somewhat later Abe pulled out of the business, and tensions grew so fierce that Harry once chased Jack around the studio lot with a lead pipe. By the end the two active Warners, men who had launched the talkies, were no longer speaking to each other.

"Without a doubt the biggest stride since the birth of the industry."

The Warners' assessment of the talkie

Beneath an image of Al Jolson in blackface, New Yorkers swarm the theater where the first talkie, The Jazz Singer, premiered in 1927.

His face a picture of determination, Thomas Ince was a trailblazer as a manager of studio operations and creator of cinematic atmosphere.

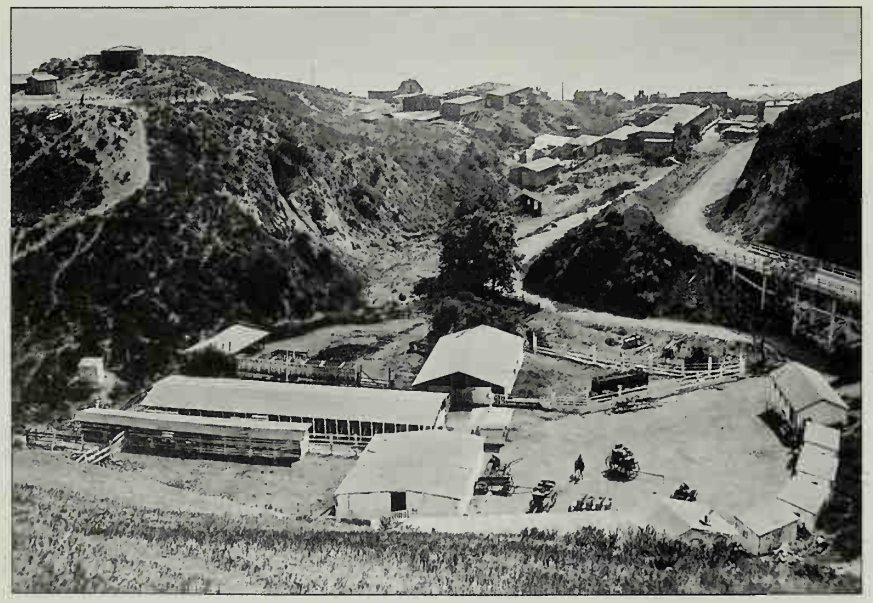
Ince the Innovator

While the budding moguls at the top of the movie industry assembled mammoth corporations, filmmaking at the nuts-and-bolts level was becoming increasingly sophisticated. Much of the pioneering work in production was done by Thomas Harper Ince, an easterner who gained fame as a maker of westerns.

Born in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1882, Ince gave up playing the rear end of a horse onstage to join Biograph in 1910 as an actor, later becoming a writer and director. The next year, he struck out for California to supervise the operations of the Bison Company, a studio specializing in the popular but still crude genre of westerns. Bison leased 18,000 acres of land near Santa Monica, where Ince created the standard industry practice of shooting from detailed scripts. Bison also signed up an entire Wild West show wintering in the area. The show had authentic cowboys and Indians, horses, steers, and wagons. The cowboys not only served as extras in Ince's oaters but also patrolled the lot's fences, ready to run off any Edison trust detectives.

Ince brilliantly exploited these assets. He had a water supply system installed so his employees could keep on shooting pictures right through the blistering summer. His studio buildings were designed so they could double as exterior sets. Within a few years he was overseeing eight directors and had more than 500 people on his payroll, and the Bison complex became known as Inceville.

In 1914 Ince launched the film career of William S. Hart, a trained Shakespearean actor who loved the Old West and was committed to re-creating it as authentically as possible. Handling a pair of six-shooters with panache, Hart went on to star in westerns until 1925. But the hard-driving Ince had pushed himself too far: He had died of an apparent heart attack a year earlier.



This 1918 view shows the filmmaking kingdom Ince ruled—studio buildings and sets spread across a southern California landscape.

Western star
William S. Hart

For the 1912 film Custer's Last Raid, Ince employed these Sioux and more than a hundred others as extras. Some had actually been present as young boys when, in 1876, Sioux and other warriors wiped out the force led by General George Armstrong Custer at the Little Bighorn.

"I reckon God ain't wantin' me much, ma'am, but when I look at you, I feel I've been ridin' the wrong trail."

Title card dialogue for William S. Hart's character

Mack Sennett (above, right)—famous as the director and producer of the hilarious Keystone Kops films—here appears in a comic acting role, doubtfully contemplating a matchmaking agency's services.

Lined up outside the Los Angeles studio of Keystone Pictures in 1915 are the rolling props of some of Mack Sennett's funniest scenes. The automotive mayhem was murder on the cars and risky for the actors, but audiences loved it.

"Go hire some girls, any girls, so long as they're pretty, especially around the knees."

Mack Sennett, on finding potential bathing beauties

The Silent Clowns

No one did more to tickle the funny bone of early moviegoers than a one-time vaudevillian named Mack Sennett. Sennett gave up the New York stage for the movie business in 1908, set out for Hollywood two years later to work with director D. W. Griffith at Biograph, and tried his hand at directing comedy for the company. He showed a genius for it, so he went out on his own in 1912 and founded Keystone Pictures. At Keystone he would turn out some 900 films, working with a whole galaxy of major comic talents—among them Fatty Arbuckle *(below)*, Mabel Normand *(far right, bottom)*, Ben Turpin *(page 41, bottom)*, and Charlie Chaplin *(page 45, top)*.

Like Thomas Ince, Sennett was a production whiz, supervising numerous one- and two-reel films simultaneously. In the early days he worked with rudimentary scripts, encouraging his cast to improvise physical hilarity on camera. Later he began to plan out his films in more detail. The essence of Sennett's comic style was slapstick—pies in the face, manic escapades with cars, and other sorts of madcap goings-on. According to Hollywood lore, the pie-throwing gimmick originated one day when the irrepressible Mabel Normand grabbed a pie from some workmen who were having lunch and chucked it at Turpin to loosen him up. Sennett found the prank so funny that he made it a staple of his comedies.

Policemen were also a regular source of laughs. Sennett realized that portraying them as self-important figures of authority made them wonderfully

Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle

In a typical moment of delightful madness, a car full of Keystone Kops (left) is mashed between two trolleys. Every Sennett actor made his first appearance as one of the bumbling officers.

Sennett's female extras, like those at right, sported bathing attire that was daringly skimpy for its time. Keystone bathing beauties were the pinup choice of many World War I soldiers.

In the 1919 film Up in Alf's Place, card playing takes a turn toward gunplay (left). In movie slapstick, bullets could fly furiously without injury to any of the characters.

A deliciously villainous Ford Sterling—another Keystone star—drives in a stake to pin Mabel Normand to the railroad tracks, while Mack Sennett himself secures her legs (right).

ridiculous: "Wherever there is dignity, comics can embroil it, embarrass it, flee from it, and thumb their noses at it," he said. The entertainingly inept Keystone Kops *(page 39, top left)* endured mishaps, collisions, and pratfalls of every kind. Keystone films also featured a host of bathing beauties *(page 39, top right)*, who were, in Sennett's words, "around to be looked at while the comics are making funny."

An alternative to slapstick was pioneered by Charlie Chaplin, who learned his trade in British music halls. He went to work for Sennett in 1913 at $125 a week and, like all Sennett actors, served a brief studio apprenticeship as a Keystone Kop. But the slapstick-loving Sennett was, fundamentally, out of tune with Chaplin's style of comedy—subtle characterizations and a wistful sadness that, as Normand said, "made your heart ache." So although Chaplin eventually was allowed to deviate from the stock Sennett roles, he didn't last long at Keystone. By 1916, having developed his trademark character the Little Tramp, he was making $10,000 a week at the Mutual Film Corporation.

If other silent-era comic actors couldn't quite reach Chaplin's level of genius, they came close. Buster Keaton *(left)*, a veteran of vaudeville, created dazzling sight gags in which he endured bizarre and often threatening situations with gloomy aplomb: In various films he soared skyward atop a runaway balloon, played solitaire in a sinking rowboat, and lived inside a steamboat's paddle wheel.

Harold Lloyd gave comedy a note of realism. Horn-rimmed glasses were the trademark of his usual role as an earnest but hapless young man. Lloyd specialized in predicaments that were extreme yet believable, such as the harrowing scene at right. He had a reputation—somewhat exaggerated—for doing all his own stunts. In reality, as a valuable box-office draw, at times surpassing even Chaplin, he was held out of the riskier scenes in favor of a stunt man.

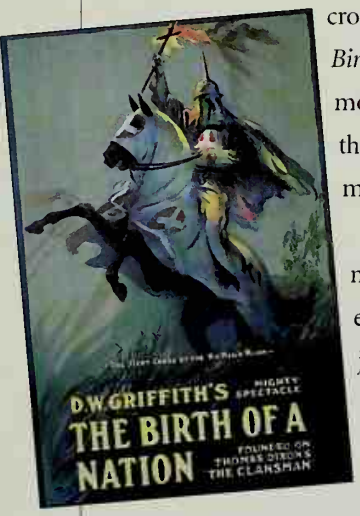
In the film One Week, Buster Keaton (left) follows instructions for putting up a prefabricated house, persevering in his long-suffering way even though the components of the kit are mismarked.

Things have somehow gone wrong again for Harold Lloyd, as he hangs on for dear life in a famous scene from the 1923 film Safety Last.

Diminutive Ben Turpin—whose eyes were insured against uncrossing—was a regular in Mack Sennett's stable of comics.

D. W. Griffith and *The Birth of a Nation*

"He gave us the grammar of filmmaking. He understood the psychic strength of the lens." So said actress Lillian Gish of David Wark Griffith, who directed her in his controversial 1915 masterpiece *The Birth of a Nation* and many other pictures. Griffith did not invent such techniques as closeups or crosscutting, but in *The Birth* he used them to more compelling effect than any American filmmaker had before.



The son of a former Civil War Confederate colonel, Griffith joined Biograph as a director in 1908. Over the next five years he made 400 films, mostly one-reelers, for the studio, until its lack of interest in feature-length films prompted him to go out on his own. Within months, he began shooting *The Birth*.

Blending grandeur and intimacy, the film followed two families, one Northern and one Southern, through the Civil War and Reconstruction eras. At 12 reels, it was the longest movie yet made in America. Its scale, its narrative complexity, and especially its nuances of emotion were unprecedented.

D. W. Griffith gives instructions on the set of The Birth of a Nation. During the shooting of some of the battle scenes, his voice couldn't be heard over the noise even through a megaphone, so he controlled the action by waving color-coded flags.

Acclaim came swiftly—and so did outrage. Griffith presented equal rights for blacks as dangerous and showed the Ku Klux Klan *(inset opposite)* in a heroic light. So powerful was the film's impact that the KKK, defunct since 1869, came back to malignant life in 1915 in Atlanta, using the premiere of *The Birth* as its inspiration.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and prominent figures like reformer Jane Addams spoke out against the film. But most viewers were simply awestruck. It opened on Broadway in New York, playing to full houses at live-theater ticket prices, and ran for 44 weeks. It persuaded Americans to think of films as an art form, not just an amusing novelty.

The next year Griffith produced an even more complex film, *Intolerance.* The lavish three-hour-and-15-minute epic used settings varying from ancient Babylon to modern America to dramatize the title theme, although one form of intolerance it failed to address was antiblack racism. Box-office results, although impressive, did not match production costs, a problem that dogged Griffith's career until he was finally forced out of the business in the 1930s.

Three moments from Griffith's The Birth of a Nation demonstrate the director's mastery of action and his careful composition of shots: a battlefield closeup of the "Little Colonel," played by Henry B. Walthall (top); Confederate and Union forces clashing (center); and John Wilkes Booth leaping from a box at Ford's Theatre after shooting President Lincoln. Griffith spent $100,000 on The Birth of a Nation, a figure that seemed enormous until the next year, when his costs for producing Intolerance ballooned to two million dollars.

The Talent Takes Over

Early filmmakers refused to credit actors by name, fearing that fame could lead to demands for higher salaries. When the cloak of anonymity was removed, their fears were realized—and then some. A leader of the upward salary spiral was golden-curled Mary Pickford, who began performing in theaters at age six and went on to a blockbuster career in film roles of innocent adorability. So powerful was her childlike image that even at age 27 she played a 10-year-old, the illusion aided by the use of oversize furniture on her sets. In real life, Pickford was canny and iron willed, and she negotiated her pay rate to a stratospheric $10,000 a week by 1915. Charlie Chaplin soon reached the same heights, as did Douglas Fairbanks, an acrobatic swashbuckler and Pickford's future husband.

In 1919, to thwart a possible salary squeeze by the big studios acting in unison, Pickford, Chaplin, and Fairbanks banded together with director D. W. Griffith to form their own company, United Artists. Continuing to make big money wasn't a bad idea, and the new operation succeeded. But there was also something to the stars' claim that United Artists' mission was to maintain the integrity of the filmmaking art without interference from greedy moguls. Chaplin was free to spend several years on a single production and to resist talkies, making silent films until 1940. And Griffith, at least for a time, was permitted his runaway budgets.

Born Gladys Smith in Toronto, Mary Pickford became known as America's Sweetheart. Her famous ringlets were augmented with hair bought from Los Angeles prostitutes.

A 1917 look-alike contest in Bellingham, Washington, testifies to Charlie Chaplin's

Sad-faced Charlie Chaplin sits in a doorway with Jackie Coogan, a waif whom the Little Tramp adopts in The Kid. Chaplin wrote and directed the poignant 1921 comedy.

immense popularity. His Little Tramp role was widely imitated by other actors.

"So the lunatics have taken charge of the asylum."

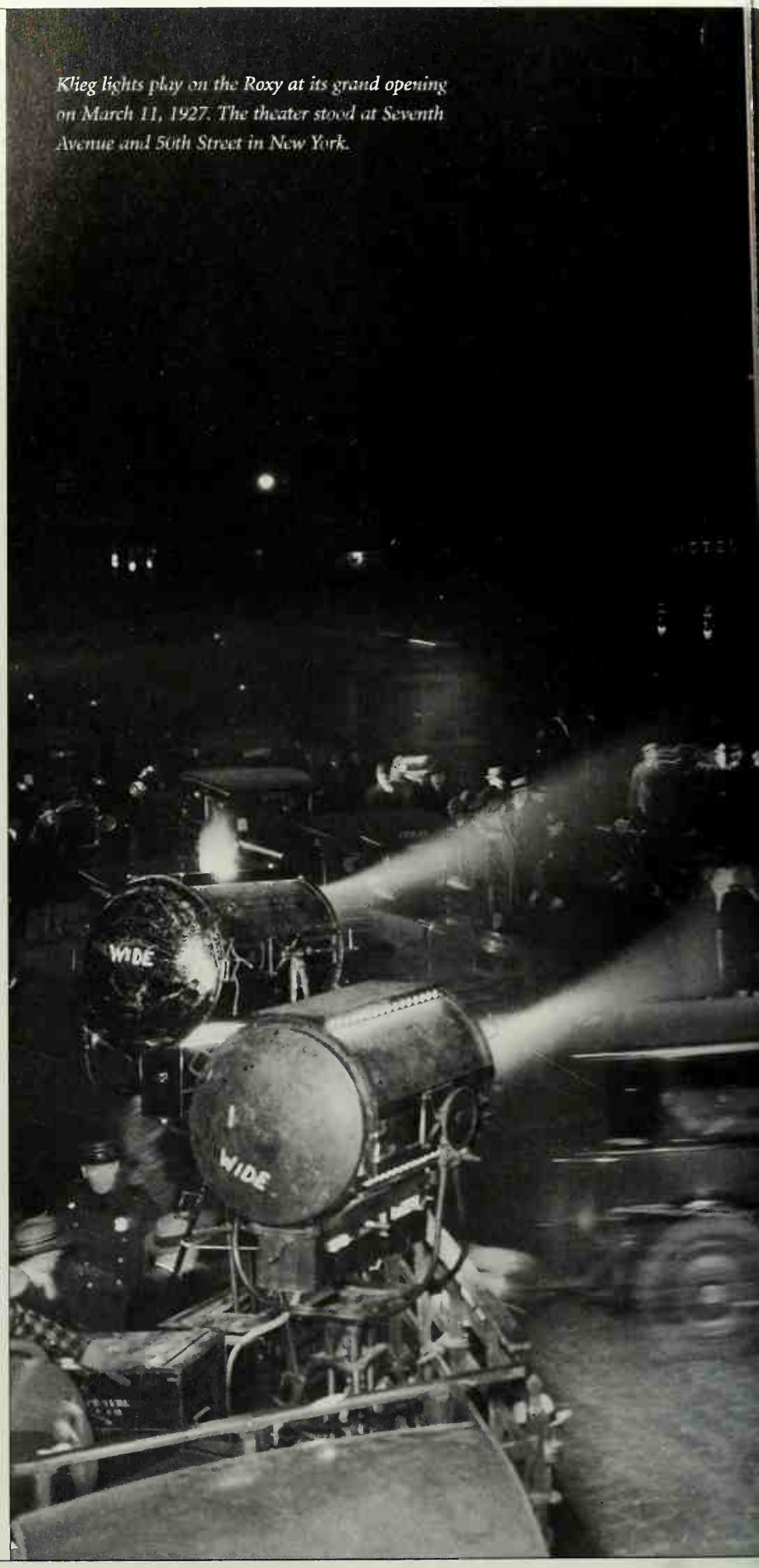
An executive's remark about United Artists

Douglas Fairbanks, the agile hero of numerous historical dramas, embraces a swooning Julanne Johnston in The Thief of Bagdad, a 1924 hit.

An Evening at the Movies

As salaries and studios grew to monumental proportions, movie theaters were doing the same. A move toward opulence was in evidence by 1910, as exhibitors in big cities began fitting out their theaters with marble, oak panels, mirrors, and deep carpeting to attract upscale audiences. A sumptuous 3,000-seat picture palace called the Strand, for example, opened in New York in 1914. But its manager, Samuel "Roxy" Rothapfel *(inset)*, had even grander visions.

In 1927 the city witnessed the debut of the Roxy *(right)*—named for Rothapfel, who had spent $10 million building what he proclaimed to be the largest theater in the world. The Roxy seated more than 6,000 viewers in air-conditioned comfort on red plush seats monogrammed with the letter *R*. It housed a 110-piece symphony orchestra, a mammoth pipe organ that was played from three separate consoles, and a fully equipped hospital in case any patrons were taken ill. Sightlines and acoustics had received meticulous attention, and a retired marine colonel trained the ushers. The Cathedral of the Motion Picture, as it was dubbed, even possessed its own set of cathedral bells. A greater contrast to the old-time nickelodeon—with its dingy storefront, smoky interior, and wooden benches—could hardly have been



Klieg lights play on the Roxy at its grand opening on March 11, 1927. The theater stood at Seventh Avenue and 50th Street in New York.

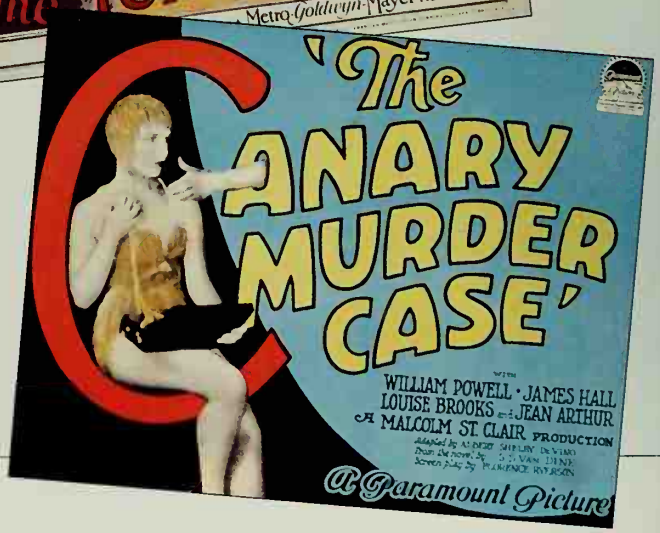
ROXY
THE CATHEDRAL OF THE MOTION PICTURE
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHORUS BALLET
NEW

imagined. Roxy, one journalist declared, had given the movies "a college education."

Glorious excess was breaking out all over. In Los Angeles Sid Grauman *(opposite, bottom left)* chose Spanish and Byzantine design touches in 1918 for the Million Dollar Theater. He built an Egyptian-style venue in 1922, then in 1927 created his masterpiece, the stunning 2,258-seat Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard.

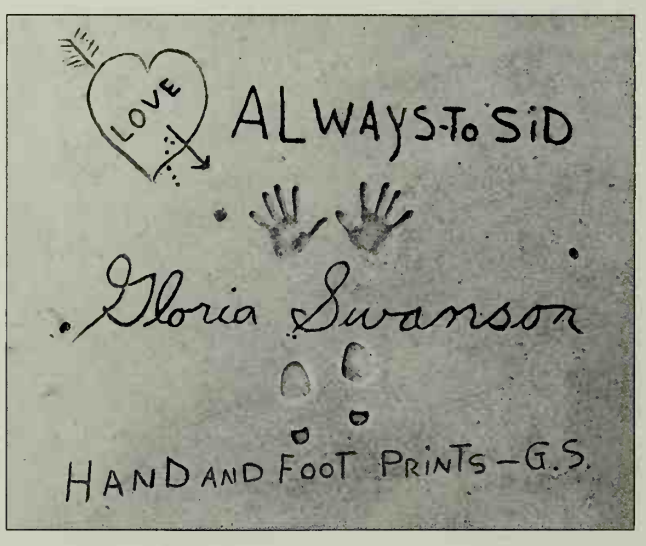
A Seattle movie palace *(opposite, top)* was modeled on the royal quarters of the Chinese emperors. The firm of Balaban & Katz gave Chicago theaters like the Tivoli, an imitation Versailles, and advertised the "intricacies of Eastern magnificence" on display at the Oriental. Balaban & Katz theaters were adorned with towering electric signs that could be seen for miles. Inside were awe-inspiring mazes of vestibules, waiting rooms, promenades, lounges, and lobbies—the latter embellished, as in all picture palaces, with vivid lobby cards advertising the latest Hollywood productions *(right)*. Each of the theaters offered a playground for children with a staff of nurses to watch them while their parents enjoyed the movie.

This escalation of extravagance did not always add up to sound financial practice, and many of the theater palaces were absorbed by the big studios. Adolph Zukor pulled Balaban & Katz into Paramount in 1925; William Fox took control of the overextended Roxy Theaters Corporation in 1926, before Rothapfel could even complete his great showplace; and by 1930 Sid Grauman was a Fox employee. But that was the movie industry—a business battlefield that resembled nothing so much as a big-screen epic.



The ceiling of the Fifth Avenue Theatre in Seattle copied—at double the size—the vault of the imperial throne room in Beijing's Forbidden City.

Impresario Sid Grauman (left) created one gaudy movie palace after another, culminating in the world-famous Chinese Theater. A Los Angeles Times columnist wisecracked, "Sid may go in for barbaric splendor, but, anyway, it's splendor." A tradition at the Chinese was for stars to leave their prints and autographs in wet cement in front of the theater (right).



Stars of the Silent Screen

The key to a silent film's box-office success, studios eventually realized, was star power. "You could take 1,000 feet of Norma Talmadge in a chair," said a director, "and her fans would flock to see it." In the eyes of the public, movie stars—images hyped by press agents—enjoyed near-mythic status. Two of the greatest, adored in America and Europe alike, lived in a palatial Hollywood home. Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks struck Britain's Lord Louis Mountbatten as fellow nobility: "At the time of their reign in Pickfair," Mountbatten said, they were "treated like royalty, and in fact they behaved in the same sort of dignified way that royalty did."

The public's fascination with stars extended to their off-screen lives, giving rise to movie magazines, tabloid coverage, and gossip columns. But not every star's behavior could stand up to such scrutiny, and many a reputation suffered lethal damage. Clara Bow, for example, was immensely popular, but her wild private life led Paramount to fire her. Even Pickford and Fairbanks, both already married when they fell in love, feared the consequences of divorce and remarriage.

No silent-era star could match the public adulation lavished on Rudolph Valentino. This Italian immigrant made a living playing stereotypical gangsters and cads until his sinuous tango scene in 1921's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* transfixed female audiences. His next film, *The Sheik*, established him as the screen's first great "Latin lover."

Valentino blended dark good looks, physical grace, and erotic force in a way that made women swoon—and men snort in derision. Mocking his bracelets and cosmetics, one writer termed him a "pink powder puff." And in his private life the great screen paramour proved less than commanding. His first wife refused to consummate their marriage, which endured all of six hours. His next, set and costume designer Natacha Rambova, demanded the lion's share of artistic control of his films.

But all sniping ceased in 1926, when Valentino, 31 and at the peak of his fame, died suddenly of peritonitis. Among the 30,000 mostly female mourners who swarmed his funeral in New York, the outpouring of grief was so rampant that police lost control of the crowd and many were trampled. There were also reports that at least a dozen overwrought fans committed suicide. Valentino's death marked the first appearance of the phenomenon of mass hysteria over a show-business idol, demonstrating the power a flickering face on a silent screen could have.

In an archetypal love scene from 1921's The Sheik, Valentino woos leading lady Agnes Ayres. "Women are not in love with me," he maintained, "but with the picture of me on the screen."

Dubbed the It girl for her self-assured sexiness, Clara Bow rose from an impoverished childhood to become a silent screen femme fatale.

Bebe Daniels displays an extravagant costume from Cecil B. DeMille's 1919 melodrama Male and Female, which juxtaposed ancient and modern scenes.

Fans copied the lavish on-screen wardrobe and hairstyles of movie queen Gloria Swanson. Marriage to a French marquis added to her glamour.

Sisters Lillian (left) and Dorothy Gish won critical acclaim in Orphans of the Storm.

Lon Chaney, the "Man of a Thousand Faces," appears as a tragic clown in the film He Who Gets Slapped (right). Chaney portrayed a series of grotesque but sympathetic outcasts, most notably in The Hunchback of Notre Dame and The Phantom of the Opera.

Three screen heartthrobs—Ramon Novarro, John Gilbert, and Roy D'Arcy, costumed for three different movies—relax between scenes on the MGM studio lot in this 1926 photo.

In the 1920 version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, John Barrymore—member of a distinguished acting clan—played both the doctor and (above, right) his evil alter ego.

Shaping Worlds on Film

★

THE HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR

"What is drama, after all," Alfred Hitchcock once remarked, "but life with the dull bits cut out?" There was some truth in that, but as a movie director, Hitchcock also knew that building drama on film was anything but easy. In the decades following D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, the 1915 masterpiece that demonstrated the evocative power of the camera *(page 42)*, movies grew into an immensely expressive art, with the director positioned at the very center of the creative process. Although approaches to the job varied somewhat, directors typically played a major role in casting, hired technicians, coached actors, made decisions about lighting and camera angles, and took a hand in the final editing.

So pivotal a role naturally drew strong personalities. Cecil B. DeMille, Hollywood's longtime maestro of epics, popularized the image of the director as despot. On the set he wore riding boots and wielded a crop, and he once told his staff, "You are here to please me. Nothing else on earth matters." Otto Preminger gained notoriety for his tirades during shooting; at the slightest provocation, he would subject an offending actor or crew member to a highly public tongue-lashing. Hitchcock referred to actors as being "like cattle."

The demanding ways of some directors seemed to know no bounds. Austrian-born Erich von Stroheim, the silent era's ultimate perfectionist, became known for his wars with studio executives over budgets, schedules, and content. For his 1922 film *Foolish Wives* he

A superb cinematic technician and an unrelenting taskmaster on the set, British-born director Alfred Hitchcock adopts an imperious look in a publicity shot for his 1960 classic of terror.

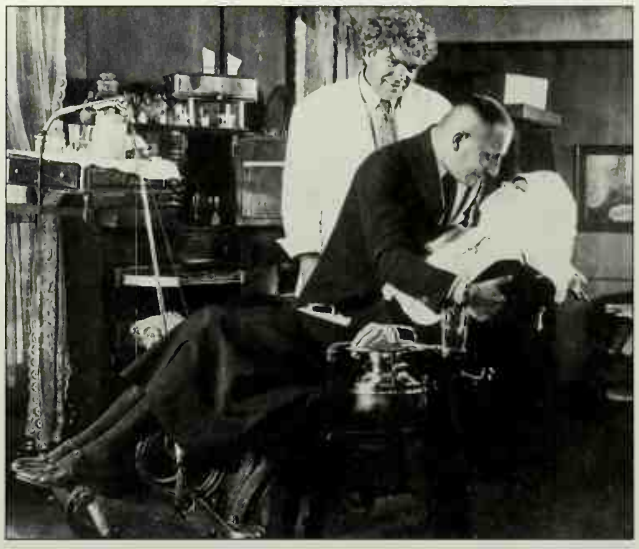
"PSYCHO" 9401
DIR. MR. HITCHCOCK
CAM. J. RUSSELL
1-29-60 DAY

Orson Welles emerges from a New York taxi, en his way to check box-office receipts for his Citizen Kane, based on the life of media mogul William Randolph Hearst.

insisted that a full-size replica of the casinos of Monte Carlo be built on the Universal lot. He then had a second version erected on the California coast to show the same casinos from the ocean side. The film took a year to shoot and ran 400 percent over budget. After a colossal fight in 1922 with Universal's boy-wonder producer Irving Thalberg about those excesses, von Stroheim transferred his talents to MGM and began work on his trailblazing film *Greed (right)*. Two years later he handed the studio what he thought was the final product—eight hours long. MGM promptly gave it to a $30-a-week film cutter, who chopped it by three quarters. "It was like seeing a corpse in a graveyard," moaned von Stroheim, though the film as released is considered one of the silent era's greatest.

In the heyday of the studio system, the all-powerful moguls were generally able to keep their top directors in check. Executives mustered the creative package of script, stars, and director, and films flowed out the studio doors with businesslike efficiency. Michael Curtiz, a Hungarian recruited by Jack Warner in 1926, directed more than a hundred pictures for Warner Bros. in almost every imaginable genre. Though he complained that "Hollywood is money, money, money, and the nuts with everything else," Curtiz managed to create some of the finest pictures of the studio era, including *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1936), *Angels With Dirty Faces* (1938), *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), and 1942's immortal *Casablanca (right)*.

Other gifted directors—Howard Hawks, Frank Capra, John Ford, and John Huston to name a few—were also able to achieve creative greatness despite the constraints of the studio system. All were skilled at navigating the shark-infested Hollywood waters, and each had a strong personal style, although they didn't like to talk about it. When asked about "the John Huston style," that master scoffed, "I myself haven't the vaguest idea." John Ford would not go along



In his 1925 film Greed, based on the Frank Norris novel McTeague, director Erich von Stroheim shows an actor playing the title character, a dentist, how to ravish a drugged patient. To achieve the realism he wanted, von Stroheim shot on location in a boardinghouse in San Francisco and in 120-degree midsummer heat in Death Valley.

The main characters in Michael Curtiz's Casablanca—Rick (Humphrey Bogart), Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman), Victor Lazlo (Paul Henreid), and Captain Renault (Claude Rains)—gather for the film's stirring climax. Rick manfully persuades his true love, Ilsa, to forget about him and fly off with her Resistance-leader husband, Victor.

William Wyler huddles with his star, Barbra Streisand, while shooting a movie version of the musical Funny Girl (1968). In a directorial career spanning almost five decades, Wyler adapted many stage productions to film. "I consider the first function of a director to be the acting," he said.

with anyone who tried to coax out of him an explanation or even an admission of his genius. But his colleagues in the industry recognized that Ford's work was a virtual encyclopedia of the film medium. "Almost anything that any of us has done you can find in a John Ford film," said director Sidney Lumet. Frank Capra described Ford as a kind of apotheosis of the profession: "half-tyrant, half-revolutionary; half-saint, half-satan; half-possible, half-impossible . . . but all director."

Orson Welles watched Ford's groundbreaking western *Stagecoach* 40 times before starting his own film-directing career with *Citizen Kane* in 1941 *(page 58)*. Welles was just 26 at the time but already a legend in the worlds of theater and radio. Three years earlier, in a Halloween eve broadcast based on the H. G. Wells novel *The War of the Worlds*, his dramatization of Martians landing in New Jersey was so convincing that it caused a nationwide panic. For his baptismal film effort, Welles was given almost unprecedented artistic freedom by RKO, and he used it to the fullest, describing the situation as "the biggest electric train set any boy ever had." Functioning as writer, performer, and daring cinematographic experimentalist, he crafted a film that combined newsreel techniques with the drama of a detective mystery. Press magnate William Randolph Hearst, who took offense at the lead character, an obvious—and unflattering—version of himself, ordered his newspapers to snub the film. Thus it was a box-office disappointment, but it would be ranked by many critics the finest American movie ever made.

Helping dispel tension, John Huston mugs to his cast during the filming of the 1982 musical Annie. Before joining the ranks of Hollywood directors, Huston—the son of a film actor—worked as a journalist, tried prizefighting, and briefly served as a cavalryman in the Mexican army.

In the mid- and late 1940s many leading directors, resentful of studio control, began trying to produce films independently. It was often a draining experience. As one critic later wrote, "the studio chiefs created a magnificent support system for directors," freeing them from worries about financing and arranging for them to work with familiar actors and crew.

As a new generation of directors came of age outside the studio system, creativity surged. Arthur Penn took one of the oldest Hollywood genres, the gangster picture, into new and more brutal territory with his stunning 1967 film *Bonnie and Clyde*. Sam Peckinpah did the same for the western two years later with *The Wild Bunch*. In terms of sheer range, no one outdid Stanley Kubrick, who filmed the cast-of-thousands Roman epic *Spartacus* (1960), the stinging antiwar

film *Paths of Glory* (1957), the blackly humorous, end-of-the-world classic *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), the breakthrough science fiction film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), and the hair-raising social satire *A Clockwork Orange* (1971).

In the 1970s and '80s directors emerged as superstars in their own right. The names Steven Spielberg *(right)* and George Lucas became synonymous with "blockbuster" after Spielberg's phenomenal success with *Jaws* (1975), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), and *E.T.* (1982), and Lucas's with *Star Wars* (1977) and its sequels. And film audiences eagerly awaited each new work by Woody Allen, Robert Altman, Brian De Palma, Francis Ford Coppola, and Martin Scorsese.

On location in Poland, Steven Spielberg directs Liam Neeson in the 1993 drama Schindler's List, which recounted the story of a German industrialist who shielded more than a thousand Jews from the Nazis by employing them in his factory.

In Hollywood's early days, at a time when one studio executive gave a director his first job because "he yells good," women hardly stood a chance. But Dorothy Arzner defied convention and masculine prejudice, working her way up from script supervisor to editor to screenwriter, then directing a comedy called *Fashions for Women* in 1927. She went on to direct Clara Bow and Fredric March in Paramount's first sound release, *The Wild Party* (1929), and subsequently worked with Claudette Colbert, Sylvia Sidney, Katharine Hepburn, Rosalind Russell, and Joan Crawford. Much later, Barbra Streisand, Penny Marshall *(right)*, and Jodie Foster were able to use their clout as actors to make forays into directing. In 1976 Italian filmmaker Lina Wertmuller became the first woman to be nominated for a Best Director Oscar, for the harrowing World War II drama *Seven Beauties*, and New Zealand-born Jane Campion was nominated in 1993 for her haunting *The Piano*. Neither won, but Campion's script earned her a screenwriting award.

Despite changing tastes and the challenges of mastering new film technology, one of the legendary directors of the 1940s and '50s, John Huston, made a brilliant comeback with *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975), *Prizzi's Honor* (1985), and *The Dead* (1987). The title of his last film was all too fitting, since Huston did not live to see its release. Earlier he had remarked on the intimate connection between directors and their work: "Each picture," he said, "is a world unto itself. Picture makers lead dozens of lives—a life for each picture. And, by the same token, they perish a little when each picture is finished and that world comes to an end."

Penny Marshall reviews the script with Tom Hanks on the set of the 1988 comedy Big, which grossed more than $100 million. A former television sitcom actress, Marshall launched her directing career two years earlier with Jumpin' Jack Flash, starring comedienne Whoopi Goldberg.

With a commanding view from the foot of a fiber-prop sphinx, Cecil B. DeMille, unsurpassed at cinematic extravaganza, surveys the set of his 1956 version of The Ten Commandments.

Masters of the Big-Budget Epic

A taste for spectacle showed itself early among filmmakers, with Cecil B. DeMille setting the pace for sheer directorial grandiosity. Pharaoh-like, he ordered the construction of the largest set in movie history for his 1923 Technicolor epic *The Ten Commandments.* In a California desert rose an ersatz ancient Egyptian city—100 feet tall, 700 feet wide, and studded with a million pounds of statuary. He also had craftsmen build 300 chariots for the film and assembled 3,500 extras and 5,000 animals for the shooting. Studio executives were appalled, but the film became the biggest moneymaker of its time. Through the silent era and for decades afterward, DeMille continued to create epics—invariably spiced with romance and violence but often neatly wrapped in the cloak of a historical or Biblical event.

In 1939 director Victor Fleming followed the same general recipe in making *Gone With the Wind (right).* For a scene of Scarlett O'Hara wandering amid wounded and dying soldiers in Civil War-ravaged Atlanta, Fleming had 1,600 bodies—800 extras and 800 dummies being rocked discreetly by the extras—arrayed in front of the meticulously re-created Atlanta train station.

In the 1950s and '60s, Hollywood, competing with TV, rolled out new wide-screen formats such as CinemaScope and VistaVision. Lavish productions like *Around the World in Eighty Days* wowed audiences, as did a spate of Biblical and Roman epics, including *The Robe* (1953), *Ben-Hur* (1959), *Spartacus* (1960), *Cleopatra* (1963), and DeMille's final film, a wildly popular remake of *The Ten Commandments.* But there was art, too. In 1962's *Lawrence of Arabia (right),* director David Lean captured the mystery and majesty of the desert with a nearly silent, three-minute sequence: A tiny speck on the horizon grows into a swirl of dust that draws closer and closer until it reveals itself as a man on a camel galloping toward the viewer—pure cinematic magic.

Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) scandalizes Southern aristocrats by leading the recently widowed Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh) in the Virginia reel in Victor Fleming's Gone With the Wind.

Peter O'Toole as Lawrence of Arabia leads a charge across the desert. Director David Lean's choice of the little-known Irish actor for the role was seen as risky but proved brilliant.

In Duck Soup Groucho Marx cavorts among a bevy of beauties as Rufus T. Firefly, the numerous comically incompetent ruler of Freedonia.

A Range of Comic Flavors

In the depths of the Depression, a comedy came along to sweep all the major Oscars. Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934) featured Clark Gable as a tough-as-nails reporter in pursuit of a runaway heiress played by Claudette Colbert. The reporter thinks he wants the story, not the girl, but Cupid launches his arrow at the mismatched couple, and hilarity reigns as the sexes battle against the inevitable. Capra's romp put several scenes into the Hollywood pantheon—including one in which Gable makes a mocking nod toward modesty by hanging a blanket on a clothesline to separate his bed from Colbert's in the cabin they're forced to occupy, and a hitchhiking sequence in which Colbert shows that a leg works better than a thumb—if it's on a comely female.

It Happened One Night inaugurated the genre of comedy described as "screwball"—a term drawn from a baseball pitch that darts and dips in unexpected ways and in a movie refers to zany goings-on. These celluloid cocktails combined fast-paced banter with themes as old as Shakespeare—mistaken identities, the battle of the sexes, and abrupt reversals of fortune. The genre reached a peak in 1938 with Howard Hawks's *Bringing Up Baby (right, top and center)*. Cary Grant played a tweedy paleontologist who finds himself mixed up, much against his will, with Katharine Hepburn as a ditzy socialite. In the ensuing romantic melee, cars are stolen, clothing torn, a lawyer is beaned by a rock, and the reluctant Grant ends up chasing a leopard through the Connecticut woods.

The Marx Brothers perfected their own inimitable brand of comedy in chaotic confections such as 1933's *Duck Soup*. In this send-up of diplomacy and saber-rattling, Groucho played the newly appointed ruler of a country called Freedonia, with brothers Chico as minister of war, Harpo as his chauffeur, and Zeppo as his secretary.

In Bringing Up Baby, Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant (top) find themselves facing an ill-tempered double of the tame leopard they have been pursuing. Their director, Howard Hawks (above), created westerns, thrillers, and war films as well as comedies.

Spencer Tracy busses Katharine Hepburn in George Cukor's witty romance Adam's Rib, which locked them, as prosecuting and defense attorneys, in a courtroom battle of the sexes.

In Billy Wilder's rollicking Some Like It Hot, bedtime aboard a train presents problems for Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis when, disguised as women, they encounter the real thing in the person of Marilyn Monroe.

As Freedonia lurches into war with its fictional neighbor, Sylvania, Groucho relaxes with a game of jacks. In a classic sequence that required perfect comic timing, Harpo dresses up like Groucho and tries to convince the fearless leader that he's gazing into a mirror. *Duck Soup*'s director, Leo McCarey, also worked with such icons of comedy as Harold Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy, Mae West, and W. C. Fields.

Comedies directed by Preston Sturges wryly toyed with American dreams of wealth and fame. In *Christmas in July* (1940), young Dick Powell believes his life has changed forever when he wins $25,000 in a contest, only to discover—after a wild spending spree—that he's not the winner he thought he was. Sturges's bubbly *Palm Beach Story* (1942) starred Claudette Colbert as a beautiful young wife disappointed by the failures of her inventor husband, played by Joel McCrea. Fleeing to Florida, Colbert encounters a trainful of wacky millionaires, including the ultrawealthy but penny-pinching oil king J. D. Hackensacker, played by crooner Rudy Vallee. Just when it seems that Colbert might snag the rich hubby of her dreams, love-starved McCrea shows up, and she has second thoughts about joining the ranks of the lunatic rich.

Preparing to shoot a scene with Jack Lemmon, Billy Wilder strolls the set of Irma La Douce, a 1963 comedy about a Paris prostitute and her gendarme lover, who has to wear disguises because he is also her pimp. In a long career, the Vienna-born Wilder won two Best Director Oscars.

Some of Hollywood's greatest actors—Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy among them—did their best comic turns under the direction of George Cukor. Despite the success of *Bringing Up Baby*, the outspoken, independent-minded Hepburn was regarded as box-office poison until Cukor helped rehabilitate her career with *Holiday* (1938) and *The Philadelphia Story* (1940). In 1949 Cukor paired Hepburn with Tracy as a battling couple of married attorneys in *Adam's Rib (page 65)*, and three years later they returned as a top female athlete and her manager in *Pat and Mike*. Their on-screen chemistry, sparked by an off-screen romance, became the stuff of film legend.

Co-workers on a bumpy road to love in Billy Wilder's The Apartment, Jack Lemmon rides with elevator operator Shirley MacLaine. Ambitious Lemmon lends his apartment to his bosses for trysts—until one of them uses it with MacLaine.

Billy Wilder *(right, top)*, known for such dark dramas as *Double Indemnity* and *The Lost Weekend*, also wrote or directed some sparkling comedies from the 1930s to the '60s—*Ninotchka* (1939), *The Major and*

Actor-director Woody Allen, costumed as a spermatozoon in a bit from the outrageous Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask) (1972), awaits with a tubeful of comrades the critical moment of launch.

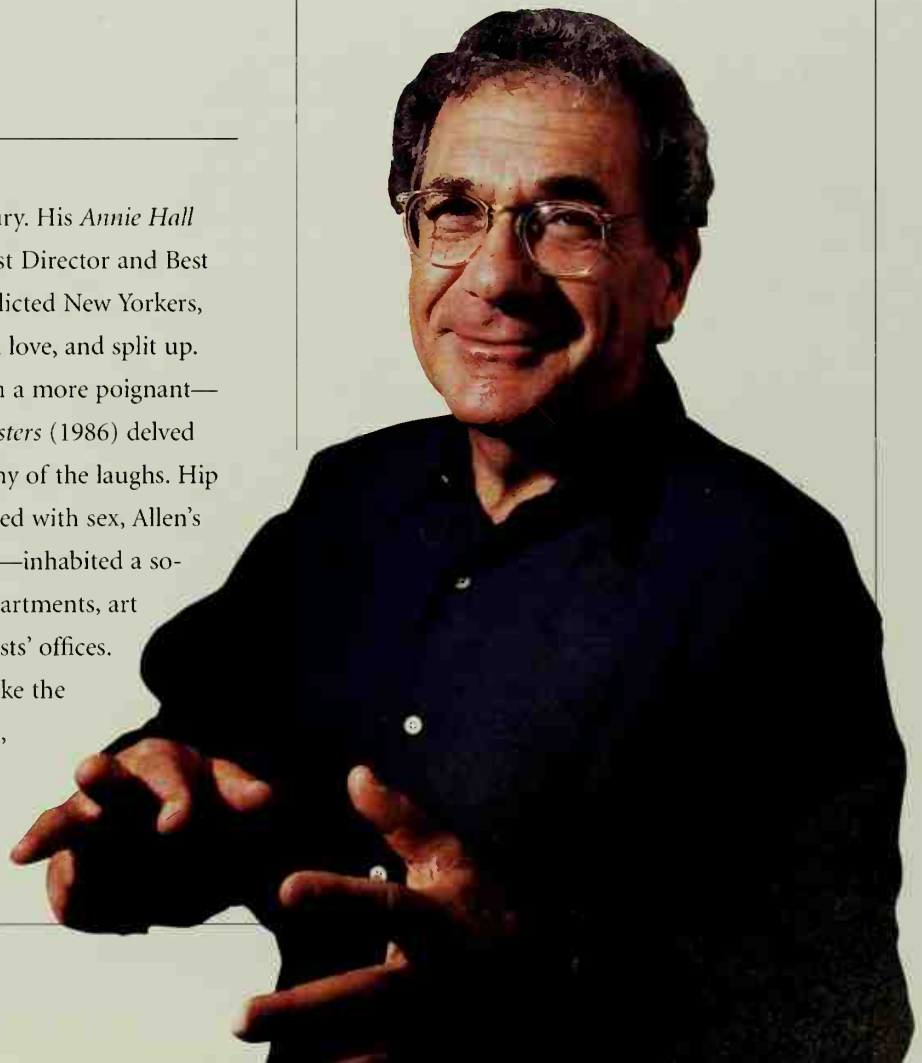
the Minor (1942), *Stalag 17* (1953), *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), and 1960's *The Apartment (page 67)*. His 1959 smash *Some Like It Hot (page 66)*, set in the Roaring Twenties, featured Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon as jazz musicians who, to elude mobsters, disguise themselves as women and join an all-girl band, where they encounter the ravishing Marilyn Monroe.

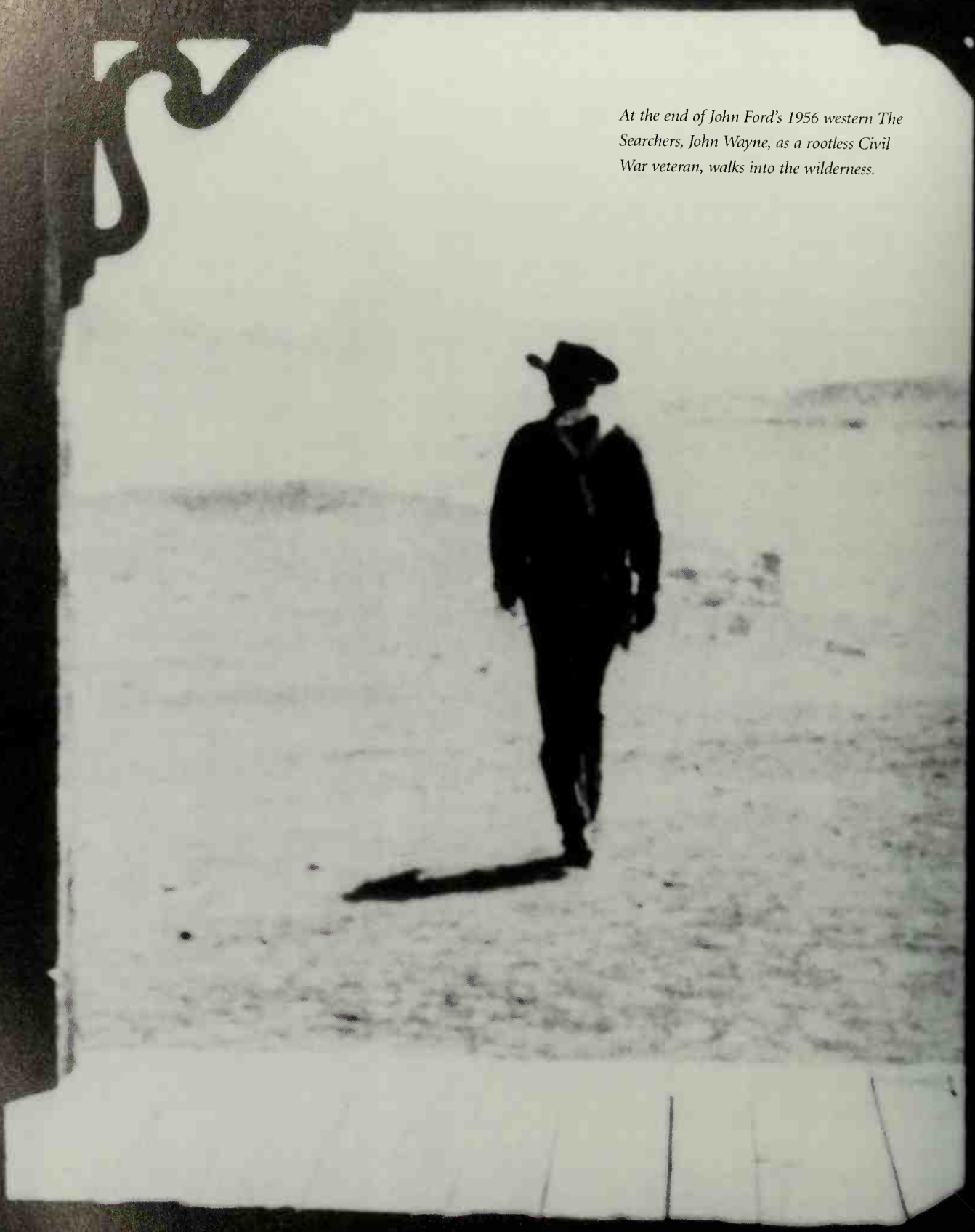
The cross-dressing theme, which made sport of the definition of sexuality itself, reached full comic flower in 1982 with Sydney Pollack's *Tootsie (right)*, in which Dustin Hoffman plays an obnoxiously touchy actor who dons women's clothes to get a TV soap opera part. He proceeds to fall in love with his female costar, who does not know, and can't be told, that he's really a man—while her father, equally ignorant of the masquerade, falls in love with him.

Just as screwball comedies humorously reflected Depression-era concerns with money, class, and status, the comedies of Woody Allen *(left)* captured the big-city neuroses of the late 20th century. His *Annie Hall* won the Best Picture Oscar for 1977 (along with Best Director and Best Screenplay) with its bittersweet tale of two angst-afflicted New Yorkers, played by Allen and Diane Keaton, who meet, fall in love, and split up. Allen's *Manhattan* (1979) played the same themes in a more poignant—but still hilarious—way, and his *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986) delved even deeper into the urban psyche without losing any of the laughs. Hip but worried, smart but self-absorbed, forever obsessed with sex, Allen's leading characters—often just reflections of himself—inhabited a sophisticated terrain of Manhattan restaurants, loft apartments, art galleries, and, perhaps most important, psychoanalysts' offices. Though far from the mainstream, these urbanites, like the heiresses and plutocrats of the screwball 1930s films, struck a chord with viewers as they acted out their version of the universal human comedy.

> "Life is divided into the horrible and the miserable. . . . So you should be thankful you're miserable."
>
> Woody Allen, in *Annie Hall*

In drag as soap opera star "Dorothy" in Tootsie, Dustin Hoffman (above, right) chats with Jessica Lange, playing an actress friend. The director, Sydney Pollack (below), worked in television for years before trying his hand at movies.





At the end of John Ford's 1956 western The Searchers, John Wayne, as a rootless Civil War veteran, walks into the wilderness.

Taut Tales of the Frontier

More than any other film genre, westerns seemed quintessentially American, harking back to the pioneers who built a civilization in a vast, challenging landscape—and wiped out ancient native societies in the process. These movies helped create an archetypal American male hero: laconic, self-reliant, good with a gun but using it only when necessary. In George Stevens's 1953 film *Shane*, for example, Alan Ladd plays a nomadic former gunfighter who reluctantly takes up arms to rescue homesteaders from a vicious gang, then moves on. Western female leads, by contrast, were often schoolmarms or other gentle tamers, bringing order to the unruly male world.

Director Fred Zinnemann explored these male and female archetypes in his starkly drawn 1952 classic, *High Noon (page 72)*. Gary Cooper is a sheriff about to hang up his guns and marry a beautiful Quaker, Grace Kelly. When he learns a gang of killers is gunning for him, he must choose, as the film's hit theme song put it, " 'tween love and duty."

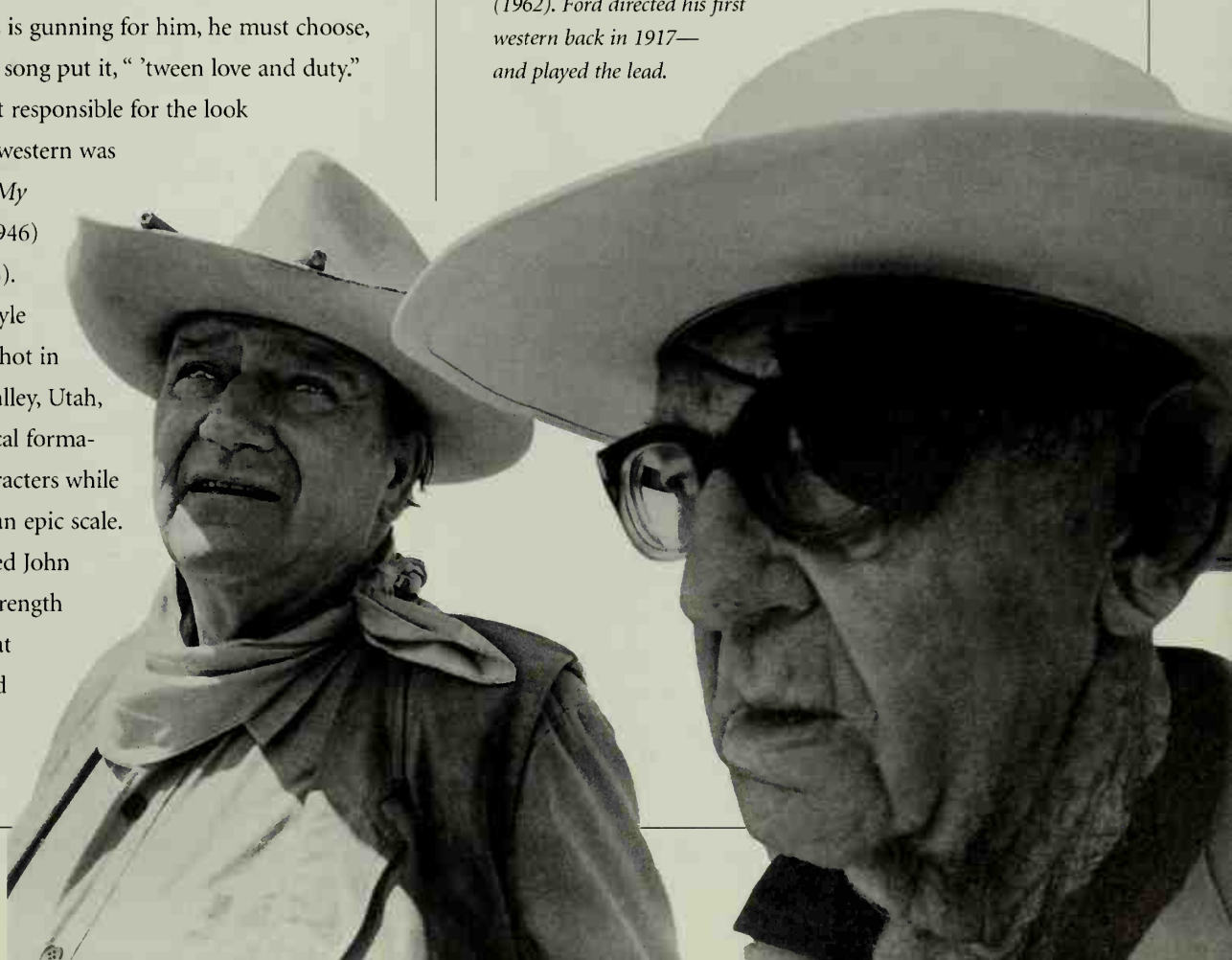
The director most responsible for the look and feel of the classic western was John Ford, creator of *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *Fort Apache* (1948). Ford established his style in *Stagecoach (inset)*, shot in 1939 in Monument Valley, Utah, where outsize geological formations dwarfed the characters while giving their struggles an epic scale.

Stagecoach featured John Wayne, whose gruff strength suited Ford so well that the pair *(right)* worked together for decades.

Wayne also teamed up with another master of the genre, Howard Hawks, lending an unsettling dimension to Hawks's *Red River* (1948) as the ruthless leader of a cattle drive.

Several directors have been fascinated by the theme of the end of the Old West. George Roy Hill's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (pages 72-73)* romanticized the two outlaws as knights of a dying frontier realm. Amid the turmoil of the late 1960s, Sam Peckinpah upended the western's conventional morality with *The Wild Bunch (page 72)*. The hyperviolent film—set in 1913, long after the frontier had been tamed—depicted some 200 killings. In 1992 Clint Eastwood's unflinching *Unforgiven* offered no heroes, only killers dueling to the death.

Film icon John Wayne stands with the master of the western, John Ford, during the shooting of The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962). Ford directed his first western back in 1917—and played the lead.



Abandoned by fearful townspeople, Sheriff Will Kane (Gary Cooper) faces a gang of desperadoes in High Noon. The story reflected the travails of the screenwriter, Carl Foreman, who had been a victim of the anti-Communist purge in Hollywood in the 1950s.

Blood-spattered Ernest Borgnine and William Holden take cover during a gunfight in Sam Peckinpah's grim, gory western The Wild Bunch (1969). Peckinpah (right) portrayed the West as the domain of amoral antiheroes who lived and died by the gun.

Surrounded by Bolivian troops, outlaws Butch Cassidy (Paul Newman) and the Sundance Kid (Robert Redford) go out in a blaze of glory. George Roy Hill's deft 1969 mixture of humor, romance, and adventure became a popular and critical hit.

The Common Man as Hero

The string of memorable movies made by Frank Capra *(left)* in the 1930s and '40s—including *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town, Meet John Doe,* and *It's a Wonderful Life (right)*—bore such a strikingly original style and personal stamp that the director's own name became an adjective: The term "Capraesque" (or, as some critics and even a self-mocking Capra put it, "Capracorn") was used to describe triumph over long odds by an ordinary citizen.

Capra himself might have represented the American dream. He arrived in California from Italy in 1903 at age six, later supported his immigrant family with odd jobs, put himself through college, got into movies as a lowly film processor, and went on to become the most popular director of his day, winning three Oscars.

Idealism was a Capra signature, perhaps seen at its purest in his 1939 film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.* When Jimmy Stewart, playing a scoutmaster turned freshman senator, filibusters on the floor of the U.S. Senate *(right)* to the point of physical collapse—and to ultimate victory over government corruption—it was one of the most unabashedly patriotic, sentimental, and emotionally powerful scenes in movie history. Capra had evoked an America where the little guy can, by decency and strength of will, prevail over the powers of greed and venality. The Depression-era audience, dabbing away tears, loved it, as did the critics.

Dissuaded from suicide by an angel after a business disaster, George Bailey (James Stewart) rediscovers the joys of his family in It's a Wonderful Life. The heartwarming 1946 fable about the goodness of the common man did poorly when first released, but it was Capra's favorite film and eventually became a Christmastime staple on TV.

Gesturing with a book containing the Declaration of Independence, Jimmy Stewart as a youthful, idealistic newcomer holds the floor of the U.S. Senate during his climactic filibuster scene in Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Stewart had a doctor swab his vocal cords with a caustic solution so his voice would be suitably raspy.

Guns blazing, James Cagney and Eddie Woods make a stand in The Public Enemy. Originally cast in the role of a doomed sidekick, Cagney was switched to the lead by director William Wellman after filming had begun—and leaped to stardom.

Journeys into Gangland

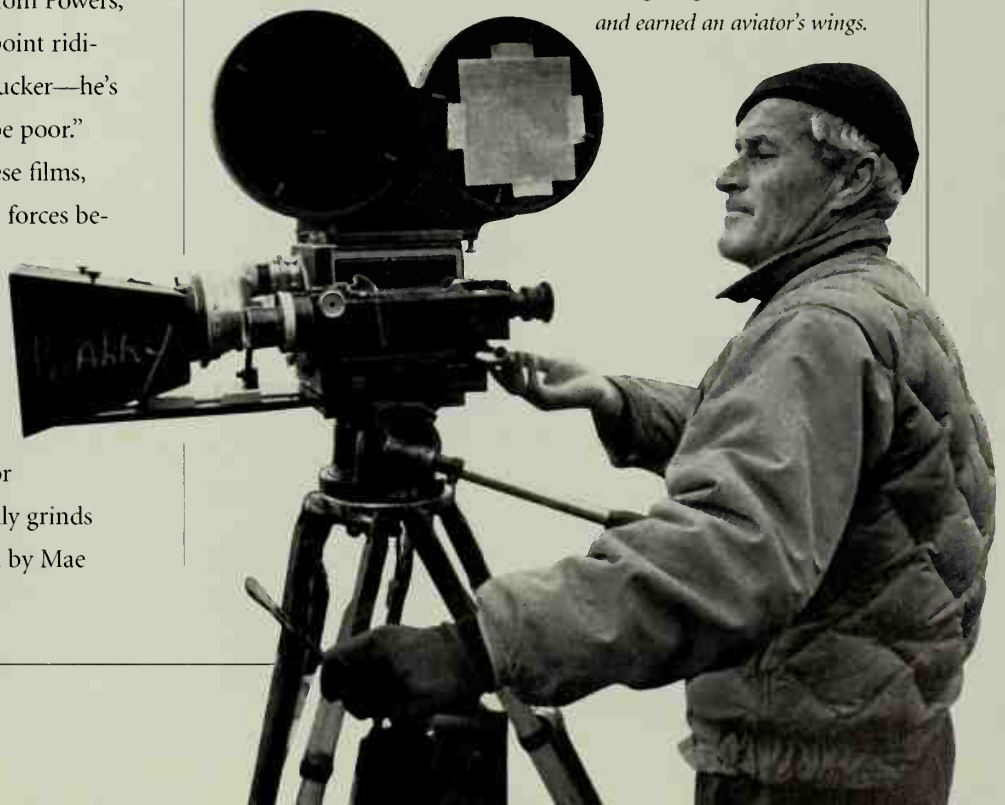
Growled threats, storms of gunplay, and the screech of sirens terrified and thrilled audiences in the early 1930s as a wave of gangster films took America on a tour of the underworld. Warner Bros. led the way when production chief Darryl F. Zanuck took note of newspaper stories about big-city gang wars and called for pictures based on the headlines. To lend authenticity to their productions, Warner Bros. and other studios hired streetwise crime reporters—the illustrious Ben Hecht among them—to spin out scenarios and fast-paced dialogue.

The most violent picture of the period, *Scarface*, directed by Howard Hawks, was modeled after the life of Chicago mobster Al Capone, with Paul Muni in the lead role. Another Hollywood tough guy, George Raft, appeared as Muni's henchman. But the two actors most responsible for defining the image of the screen gangster were Edward G. Robinson *(right, top)* and James Cagney. With his swagger and his flair for tough talk, Cagney ignited the screen when, in 1931, he appeared in *The Public Enemy (left)*, directed by William Wellman *(right, bottom)*. It recounted how Cagney's youthful character, Tom Powers, fell into a life of crime and thrived at it, at one point ridiculing his hardworking brother thus: "Aw, that sucker—he's too busy going to school. He's learning how to be poor."

Though crime ultimately did not pay in these films, Depression-era audiences, buffeted by economic forces beyond their control, often cheered the bad guys who outsmarted the law and polite society to get fancy cars, fancy clothes, fancy apartments, and fancy dames. Gangster films, in fact, represented a low point in Hollywood's depiction of women. Cagney, for example, became famous for the scene in *The Public Enemy* in which he angrily grinds a grapefruit half into the face of his moll, played by Mae

Edward G. Robinson guns down a foe in Warner Bros.' first gangster picture, Little Caesar (1930), directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Although less bloody than some successors, the film mesmerized audiences with its grimness. When Robinson is cornered by cops at its conclusion, he defiantly yells, "Come and get me!" After his vivid performance playing Rico Bandello, Robinson struggled for years to escape being typecast as a mobster.

William Wellman, director of The Public Enemy, had tough-guy credentials himself. A former professional hockey player, he joined the French Foreign Legion in World War I and earned an aviator's wings.



Clarke, who endured slaps, kicks, and shoves in other gangster movies as well.

The films drew criticism from censors, sociologists, and politicians, who feared that they were influencing young people toward criminality. Under this pressure the studios altered course and began to emphasize the virtues of hard work over the appeal of the tough-guy lifestyle. In films such *as "G" Men* (1935), the cops became all-American good guys in a life-and-death struggle against the evil underworld. In 1938 Cagney and Warner Bros. cinematically atoned with the Michael Curtiz film *Angels With Dirty Faces.* Cagney played the vicious mobster Rocky Sullivan, regarded as a hero by the boys in his old slum neighborhood—to the dismay of Catholic priest Jerry Connelly (Pat O'Brien), Rocky's boyhood pal. When Rocky is condemned to die in the electric chair, Father Connelly makes a death-row plea to the killer. Taking the priest's appeal to heart, the sneering, cocky Cagney marches toward the execution chamber, then suddenly pretends to break down, transforming himself into a sniveling, weeping coward. His supposed emotional collapse is witnessed by assembled reporters, who do not know of its redemptive purpose. The next day the kids in the slums read the headline "ROCKY DIES YELLOW" and realize that crime not only doesn't pay, it doesn't make heroes.

During the next decade, the gangster picture gave way to the murky world of film noir *(page 80),* but in 1967 director Arthur Penn *(inset)* revived the genre for a hyperviolent farewell in *Bonnie and Clyde*, based on the real-life robbery-and-murder spree of Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker. Starring Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway *(left),* the film brimmed with old-style movie star allure, and then seemed to wash it away in a tide of blood—though some viewers felt that Penn, intentionally or not, had glamorized crime all over again.

Faye Dunaway writhes under the impact of bullets in the harrowing climax of Bonnie and Clyde. Arthur Penn (above) filmed the scene as a slow-motion dance of death.

Above: Noir posters promise gritty atmosphere and tawdry sex. Below: In Laura, Dana Andrews as a homicide detective interrogates the suspicious but alluring title character (Gene Tierney).

Dark Films About Dark Deeds

Film noir—a genre whose name, meaning "black," came from French critics—was soaked in cynicism born of the Depression and World War II. Populated by cigarette-puffing hoods and sensuous femmes fatales, its domain of cheap hotels and nighttime city streets promised little more than disappointment and the double cross.

Noir directors created a style that featured deep shadows, stark angles, and a sense of menace. An early example of the form was *This Gun for Hire* (1942), directed by Frank Tuttle and starring Alan Ladd in a hallmark tough-guy role. A pair of 1944 noir classics featured Fred MacMurray playing against type as a slick insurance salesman lured into murder in Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* and a hard-as-nails Dana Andrews *(left, bottom)* in *Laura*, by Otto Preminger. Novelist James M. Cain's steamy *The Postman Always Rings Twice* was the basis for Tay Garnett's 1946 masterpiece. French-born Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past* (1947) starred the inherently noir Robert Mitchum.

Nothing was straightforward in the noir world. Time was fractured into frequent flashbacks, and plots were filled with red herrings and unexpected twists that often left the audience off-balance and uneasy. In John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon (right)*, hard-boiled detective Sam Spade, played by Humphrey Bogart, acts not out of heroism but according to some world-weary private code: "When a man's partner is killed he's supposed to do something about it. It doesn't make any difference what you thought of him, he was your partner and you're supposed to do something about it." The meaning of it all, in true noir fashion, remains impenetrable.

As gumshoe Sam Spade in John Huston's 1941 noir tour de force The Maltese Falcon, Humphrey Bogart vies with ponderous Sydney Greenstreet and sniveling Peter Lorre over a gem-studded statuette.

Elia Kazan demonstrates emotion on a set. A master at bringing out the best in his cast, Kazan directed 21 actors in performances that drew Academy Award nominations, resulting in nine Oscars.

"The camera is more than a recorder, it's a microscope. It penetrates, it goes into people and you see their most private and concealed thoughts."

Elia Kazan, 1981

Gritty Portrayals of City Life

As America grew increasingly urbanized after World War II, directors turned their attention to cities as the settings, and sometimes even the subjects, of their films. They expanded genres like gangster movies and film noir into works that were more realistic, more richly textured, and often far more violent than the movies of the 1930s. Their goal, as director Elia Kazan *(left)* put it, was "to get poetry out of the common things of life."

Kazan was the pioneer of a new naturalism based on location shooting, on long shots and takes, and, especially, on the psychological exploration demanded by Method acting. This technique, derived from the work of Russian stage director Konstantin Stanislavsky, was taught at New York's Group Theatre and Actors Studio in the 1930s and '40s, when Kazan was working on Broadway. A genius at inspiring actors, Kazan brought the Method to Hollywood in the late 1940s and changed film acting styles forever.

Kazan himself, however, soon became a pariah among many theater and movie people. He had been a member of the Communist Party in the early 1930s but had quit when party bosses ordered a Communist takeover of the Group Theatre. Much later, during the controversial red-hunting days of the Cold War, he appeared before the infamous House Un-American Activities Committee, admitting his own past party membership and naming former Communist colleagues, some of whose careers were ruined as a result. Excoriated as one who had betrayed friends to a witch hunt, he said, "Any time you hurt people, and I did hurt some people, you don't like it." But then he pointed to those friends' continuing silence in the face of Stalin's murderous dictatorship and said, "I'm glad I was on the other side."

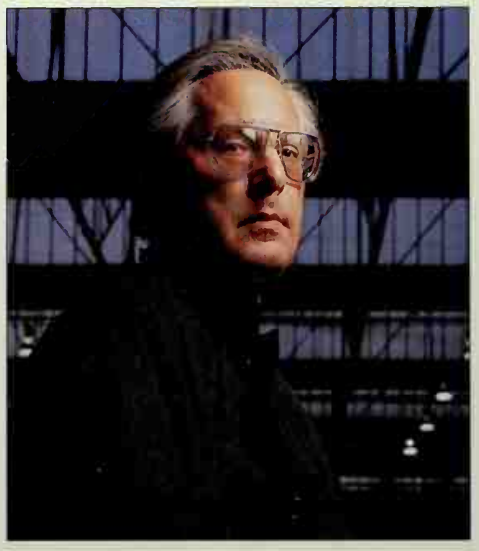
Perhaps because of this experience, Kazan's 1954 masterpiece, *On the Waterfront (right)*, is a study in the

In scenes from Elia Kazan's On the Waterfront, ex-boxer Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) hears his brother, Charlie (Rod Steiger), confess his own corruption and betrayal (top); staggers under a mob beating (bottom left); and strides past once hostile fellow dockworkers (bottom right).

Hustlers Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voight face a frigid New York wind together in John Schlesinger's Midnight Cowboy. The film's raw subject matter drew an X rating, later revised to R.

ambiguities of betrayal. The black-and-white film, which won eight Academy Awards, explores gangster control of dockworkers' unions around New York harbor. Its inarticulate longshoreman hero, Terry Malloy, played by Marlon Brando, faces an agonizing crisis of conscience: whether to inform on his gangster acquaintances, when doing so would be anathema among his peers, even those being exploited by the crooks. He makes his choice under pressure from a priest, but only after several mob murders—one victim the brother of the girl he loves, another his own brother. His punishment for informing is ostracism; his reward is belief in his own integrity. "They always tell me I'm a bum," he says. "Well, I ain't a bum."

Kazan would go on to make more superb movies, but because of his own act of informing in 1952, even a special award given him by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences almost half a century later was controversial. Yet all admitted he was one of Hollywood's greatest directors, a man who had forged a new acting style that, as Martin Scorsese would later say, "revealed something in the natural behavior of people that I hadn't seen on the screen before: the truth behind the posture."



Chicago-born William Friedkin began working in TV while still in his teens. He later directed more than a dozen films, ranging from the fluffy rock-and-roll flick Good Times to the daring film about gay life The Boys in the Band.

The new style permeated urban films of the '60s and '70s, such as British director John Schlesinger's first Hollywood movie, *Midnight Cowboy.* This was the tale of a Texas drifter, played by Jon Voight, who arrives in New York to hustle rich women and is hustled himself—for $20—by a sickly, repulsive, streetwise con man with the memorable name of "Ratso" Rizzo (Dustin Hoffman) *(left)*. The young Texan, instead of getting revenge, develops a protective affection for the doomed Ratso. The layered, sensitive performances Schlesinger drew from his stars, evoking both laughter and tears, earned the film three Academy Awards.

A fast-moving documentary style and a lengthy, pulse-pounding car chase won William Friedkin *(right, top)* a Best Director Oscar for the 1971 thriller *The French Connection (right)*, which pitted New York cop Popeye Doyle against an urbane European heroin smuggler, Alain Charnier. Friedkin's direction

A Marseilles hit man is gunned down by New York cop Popeye Doyle (Gene Hackman) after a spectacular car chase in The French Connection.

Robert De Niro as Jake LaMotta takes a punch in Martin Scorsese's Raging Bull (above). Below, actor and director confer on the set of Taxi Driver; De Niro played a Vietnam veteran driven homicidally over the edge by the corruption of New York life.

helped evoke a superb performance from Gene Hackman as Popeye, despite the liberal actor's disgust for the bigoted, racist, dishonest but dedicated character he portrayed. But the film, as Friedkin said and showed, was about "that thin line between the policeman and the criminal."

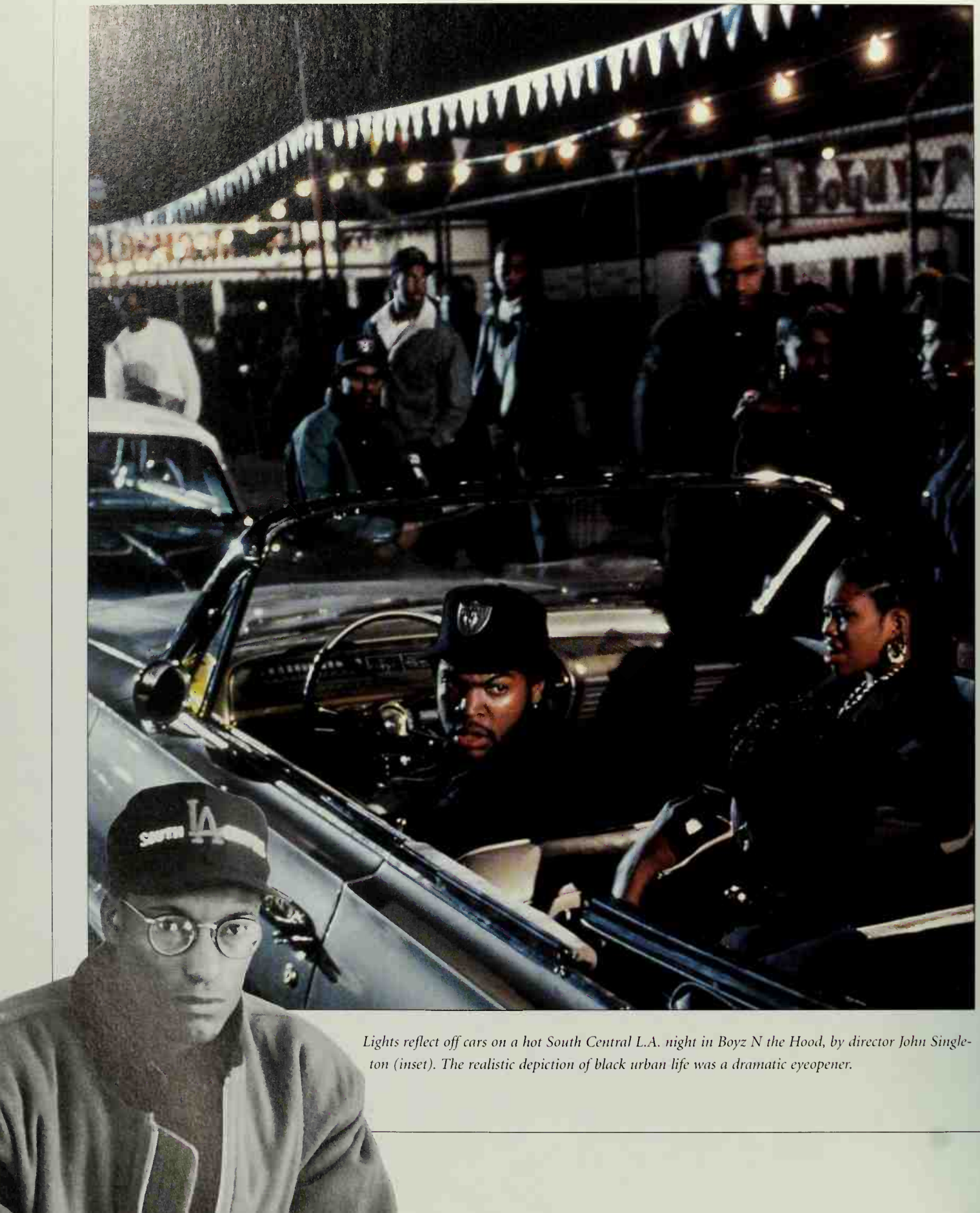
Although Friedkin would have another hit with the horror thriller *The Exorcist* (1973), he was eclipsed during the decade by a group of young new directors, including George Lucas *(page 132)* and Steven Spielberg *(page 108)*. All had been fascinated by film since childhood, all possessed encyclopedic movie knowledge, and most trained at university film schools. The two most attuned to the harsh urban American scene were Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese.

In Hollywood Coppola was a man of many parts. By the time he directed his first big-budget movie he had already shared a Best Screenplay Oscar for *Patton*, produced George Lucas's first science fiction film—*THX-1138*—and founded his own production company. His big breakthrough as a director was *The Godfather* (1972). With a large cast of future stars and Marlon Brando in the title role *(right)*, it became an overnight classic, effortlessly balancing the vicious world of organized crime, the ethnic family values within it, and the deeply realized, tragic characters of those who shared those values.

Of this almost mythic film and its sequels, Coppola's colleague Martin Scorsese said, "It's like epic poetry, like *Morte d'Arthur*. My stuff is like some guy on the street corner talking." Scorsese grew up in New York's Little Italy. Inspired by the power and honesty of films like Kazan's and by the new-wave style of director-conceived, or auteur, movies arriving from Europe in the 1960s *(page 107)*, he wanted, he said, "to create images that reflected the life around me: what I saw in the streets, at home and, in particular, in my church. There I found the images very powerful, transcendent and, at times, lurid and erotic."

Scorsese formed a famous and enigmatic partnership with Method actor Robert De Niro *(left)*. Together they made a string of tough, gritty, big-city films, including *Mean Streets* (1973), *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Raging Bull* (1980),

Stroking a favorite cat, Don Vito Corleone (Brando) balances the conflicting roles of paterfamilias and Mafia chieftain in The Godfather. His "Make him an offer he can't refuse" entered the language.



Lights reflect off cars on a hot South Central L.A. night in Boyz N the Hood, by director John Singleton (inset). The realistic depiction of black urban life was a dramatic eyeopener.

and *GoodFellas* (1990). Dark though Scorsese's stories were, by using staccato camera work and editing he re-created the pulsing energies of New York. He found poetry in rock music, traffic lights, neon signs, shiny cars, street noise, and (as in *Taxi Driver*) demented, often improvised voice-overs.

Revolutionary and iconoclastic in their time, Scorsese and his fellow upstart directors of the '70s paved the way for, and helped support, an even younger generation of filmmakers. These newcomers sometimes lacked the formal training of their mentors, but they were self-taught and well taught.

Among them were African American directors, almost nonexistent in Hollywood until the 1970s, when Melvin Van Peebles created *Sweet Sweetback's Baad Asssss Song*, evoking the realities of black urban life. His famous successors included Spike Lee *(page 102)* and wunderkind John Singleton *(inset, opposite)*, the youngest filmmaker (at 24) to garner Academy Award nominations for both directing and screenwriting for his 1991 work *Boyz N the Hood (left)*. This story about three young men struggling to grow up amid the gang violence of South Central Los Angeles was so thick with reality and so vibrantly acted that it reminded people, as one critic put it, that "a ghetto is also a home." Singleton followed up in 1993 with *Poetic Justice*, which showed South Central L.A. life from the women's point of view.

The body of new African American film work was one sign of the growing authority of independent filmmakers; another was the wild success enjoyed by such visceral, anti-intellectual writer-directors as Quentin Tarantino, whose film education came from working in a video store. His bloody first movie, *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), became a cult classic. He entered the mainstream in 1994 with the outrageously violent but darkly funny *Pulp Fiction*. Using every seedy urban reference and lashings of comic-book gore, the film intertwined the tales of small-time thieves with those of a pair of hit men. It was nominated for seven Academy Awards—and won for Tarantino's script. Its most obvious virtues, however, were the sterling performances the director drew from actors John Travolta *(top right)*, Uma Thurman *(bottom right)*, Samuel L. Jackson, and Bruce Willis.

John Travolta, as the unintellectual hit man Vincent Vega, struggles with a thought-provoking situation in Quentin Tarantino's Pulp Fiction. The film showcased Travolta's remarkable acting skills and restored his long-moribund career.

"You name me any horrific thing, and I can make a joke out of it."

Quentin Tarantino, 1994

Directors as Music Men

The Hollywood musical was born with the introduction of sound movies—in Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer* (1927)—and then languished. It took visionary film artists and moviegoers longing for escape from the Depression to make the musical a new American genre.

First credits go to Darryl F. Zanuck, who, despite the misgivings of Warner Bros., produced the hit *42nd Street* in 1933—with Broadway's Busby Berkeley as choreographer. Berkeley designed his numbers specifically for the screen and was the first to use a camera mounted overhead *(page 92)* or hidden beneath the stage. The result of *42nd Street*'s success was a series of extravagant Berkeley-choreographed films marked by kaleidoscopic chorus line formations.

A flood of song-and-dance flicks followed from other studios. At RKO, Fred Astaire danced through a series of comedies, mostly with Ginger Rogers. ("He gives her class and she gives him sex," Katharine Hepburn observed.) MGM set up a team that would dominate the genre, named the Freed Unit after its producer, lyricist Arthur Freed. He acquired *The Wizard of Oz (page 114)* for MGM and hired famed screenwriters like Betty Comden and Adolph Green, songwriters from Irving Berlin to Alan Jay Lerner, and directors like Vincente Minnelli.

After assisting Busby Berkeley on *Strike Up the Band* (1940), Minnelli directed the smash hit *Meet Me in St. Louis (left, top)*, a nostalgic family tale set in 1900 whose theme, like that of *The Wizard of Oz*, was "There's no place like home." Minnelli's characteristically brilliant use of color and design and his seamless working in of sentimental songs made the film a classic. Minnelli

Director Vincente Minnelli calms a high-strung Judy Garland, his future wife, on the set of 1944's Meet Me in St. Louis (left). The 21-year-old star was reluctant to play yet another teenage ingenue, but the film proved a vehicle for some of her classic numbers, including "The Trolley Song" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

Co-directors Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen confer on the set of Singin' in the Rain (1952). The pair, both dancers and choreographers, had already collaborated on Broadway and in Hollywood, most recently in 1949's On the Town.

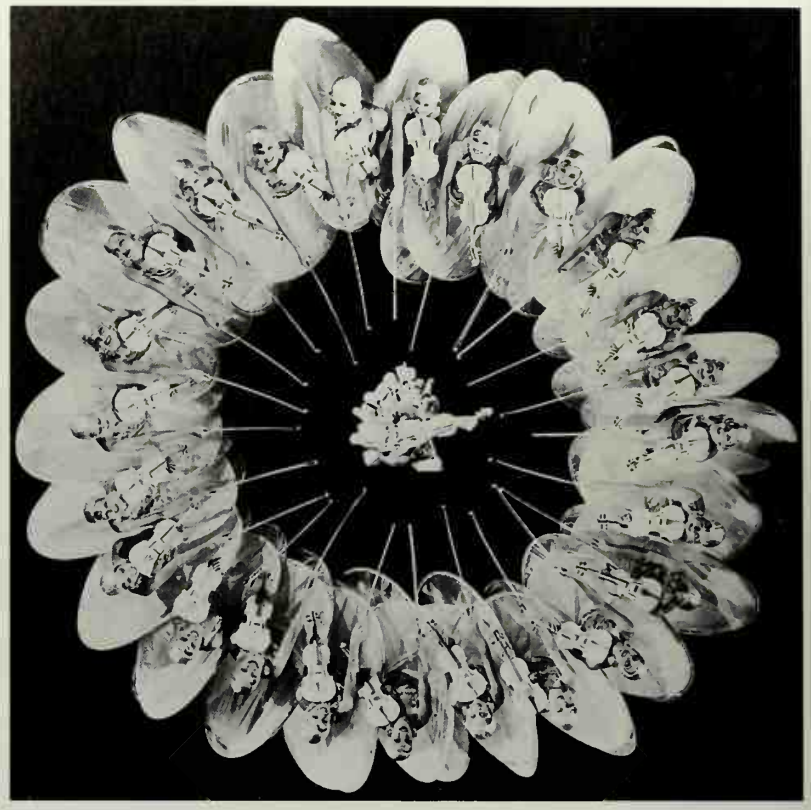
Gene Kelly climbs a lamppost in the title number from Singin' in the Rain. Stanley Donen's swinging, boom-mounted camera added to the exuberance of the famous routine.

would direct a Freed protégé from Broadway, dancer-choreographer Gene Kelly, in 1951's *An American in Paris,* based on a George Gershwin tone poem. The Freed-Kelly collaboration, with co-director Stanley Donen *(page 90),* reached its peak the following year with *Singin' in the Rain (page 91),* a blockbuster about "old" Hollywood written by Comden and Green around decades of Freed's own songs.

Traditional musicals remained popular in the 1950s and '60s, with such box-office smashes as *Guys and Dolls* (1955), *Gigi* (1958), *The Music Man* (1962), *My Fair Lady* (1964), and *The Sound of Music* (1965). But a newer, more edgy, more urban kind of musical was in the wings.

The first of these was a 1961 adaptation of Broadway's *West Side Story.* Choreographed by Jerome Robbins *(right),* the tale—*Romeo and Juliet* transferred to New York, with music by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim—became cinematic in the hands of Robbins's co-director, Robert Wise. Spectacularly filmed on location, it won 10 Oscars.

A decade later came *Cabaret (opposite),* the inspired work of director-choreographer Bob Fosse, notorious for his risky lifestyle of drink, drugs, cigarettes, and women—which ended abruptly with a heart attack when he was 60. Fosse used Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories* to create a new kind of musical—not surprisingly, about decadence. The songs and dances provided comment not only on the tale of Sally Bowles (Liza Minnelli) and her lovers, but on dissolute Weimar Germany and the approaching Nazi storm. The strands of story and song became one, thanks to Fosse's brilliant direction.



Chorines with neon-lighted violins form a flower in Gold Diggers of 1933. The lavish spectacle was a signature of Busby Berkeley musicals like this one.

Choreographer Jerome Robbins demonstrates a move for West Side Story. "Dancers didn't always like him," co-director Robert Wise said, "but they respected him."

In 1972's groundbreaking Cabaret, Liza Minnelli (left) belts one out at Berlin's Kit Kat Klub, introduced and supported by the club's reprobate emcee (Joel Grey, above) and his sleazy chorus. The film's often savage dancing and stylized sets—inspired by German Expressionist painting—were the brilliant work of director-choreographer Bob Fosse (below).

"I always thought I would be dead at 25. It was romantic. People would mourn me: 'Oh, that young career.' "

Bob Fosse

Bringing War to the Screen

War stories offer a wealth of cinematic possibilities to the director: high drama and low comedy; epic scope alongside the intimate; and tales of a cross section of American characters at the most challenging moments of their lives.

Combat films provide civilians their only view of war. What the films have shown them depends on both the director and his era. During and after World War II, for instance, war movies emphasized the courage of soldiers in battle. In many of these films, as one real-life soldier observed, "people sat in their trenches and had ideological discussions about the beauties of democracy at home." John Sturges's 1963 action adventure about Allied POWs, *The Great Escape,* was in this tradition; so was producer Darryl F. Zanuck's panoramic re-creation of D-Day, *The Longest Day* (1962). A much more grim and realistic look at war marked Steven Spielberg's 1998 masterpiece, *Saving Private Ryan (pages 124-125),* whose opening sequence of the American D-Day landing on

Private Maggio (Frank Sinatra) defies a sadistic sergeant (Ernest Borgnine) in 1953's From Here to Eternity. The film won eight Oscars.

A resplendent George C. Scott as General George S. Patton exhorts his army. Scott's dominant performance inspired one critic to say that Patton "comes close to being the most lavish one-man movie ever made."

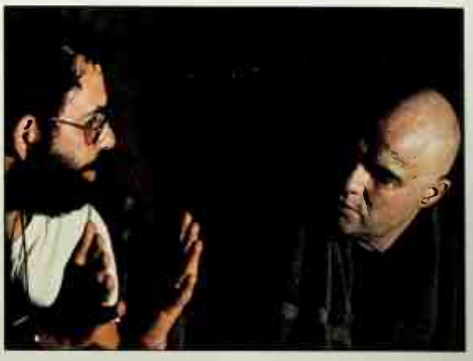
Omaha Beach constitutes perhaps the starkest and most terrifying cinematic look at combat ever offered to the moviegoing public.

Lewis Milestone's film of Erich Maria Remarque's World War I novel about idealistic young Germans caught in a wilderness of futile death, *All Quiet on the Western Front,* also offered a nightmare vision. Fine acting and unforgettable images—severed arms holding barbed wire, for instance—made the 1930 film a classic. A dramatic and many-sided tale of America's pre-World War II army was Fred Zinnemann's powerful *From Here to Eternity (page 94),* which culminated with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. David Lean presented a look at the psychology of men in wartime situations in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), a tale of British POWs in a Japanese camp in which their brave and honorable commander proceeds blindly toward self-destruction.

America's Vietnam experience brought new ambiguity to combat movies, epitomized by Franklin Schaffner's 1970 World War II epic, *Patton (page 95).* George C. Scott's portrayal of the brilliant but flawed warrior and Schaffner's ruthless insistence on authenticity resulted in a film that pleased both hawks and doves.

A more typical response to Vietnam, however, was a series of passionately antiwar films in the 1970s and '80s. The funniest was 1970's *MASH (inset),* whose setting was actually the Korean conflict. Getting his first crack at a big-time movie, TV director Robert Altman broke every rule in the Hollywood book in filming *MASH*'s virtually plotless string of vignettes skewering the military.

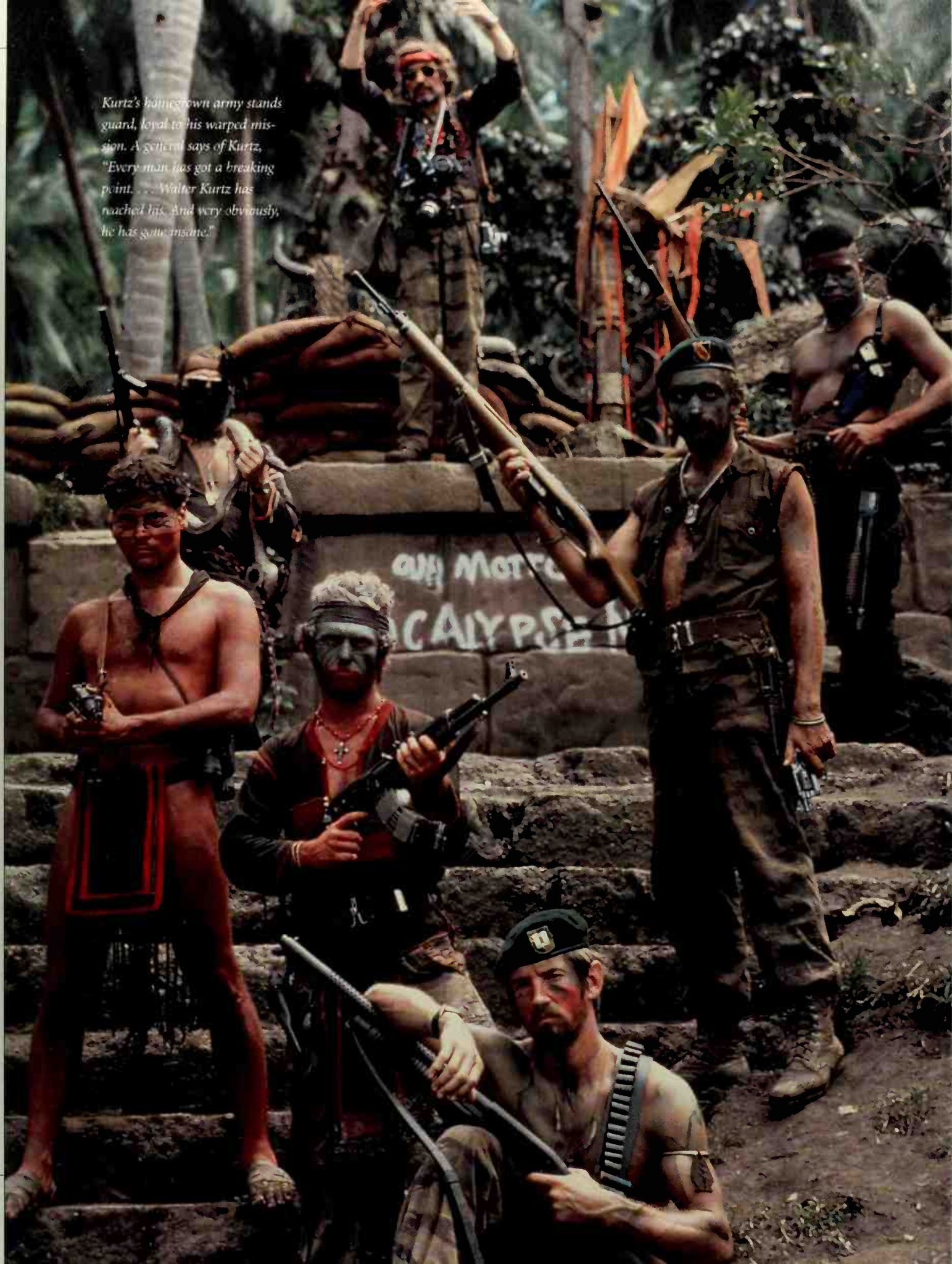
The most chilling of the antiwar films was Francis Ford Coppola's phantasmagoric 1979 vision, *Apocalypse Now (right),* which followed GIs in Vietnam on a descent into madness during a mission to assassinate a Green Beret officer (Marlon Brando) gone off the deep end. The situation is so ugly that the commander of the team, played by Martin Sheen, is told by his superiors in military doublespeak that the mission "does not exist, nor will it ever exist." When Sheen reaches Brando's jungle enclave, he sees the irrelevance of right and wrong in the moral squalor of Vietnam. "Charging a man with murder in this place," he thinks to himself, is "like handing out speeding tickets at the Indy 500." The film was nominated for eight Academy Awards, winning two.



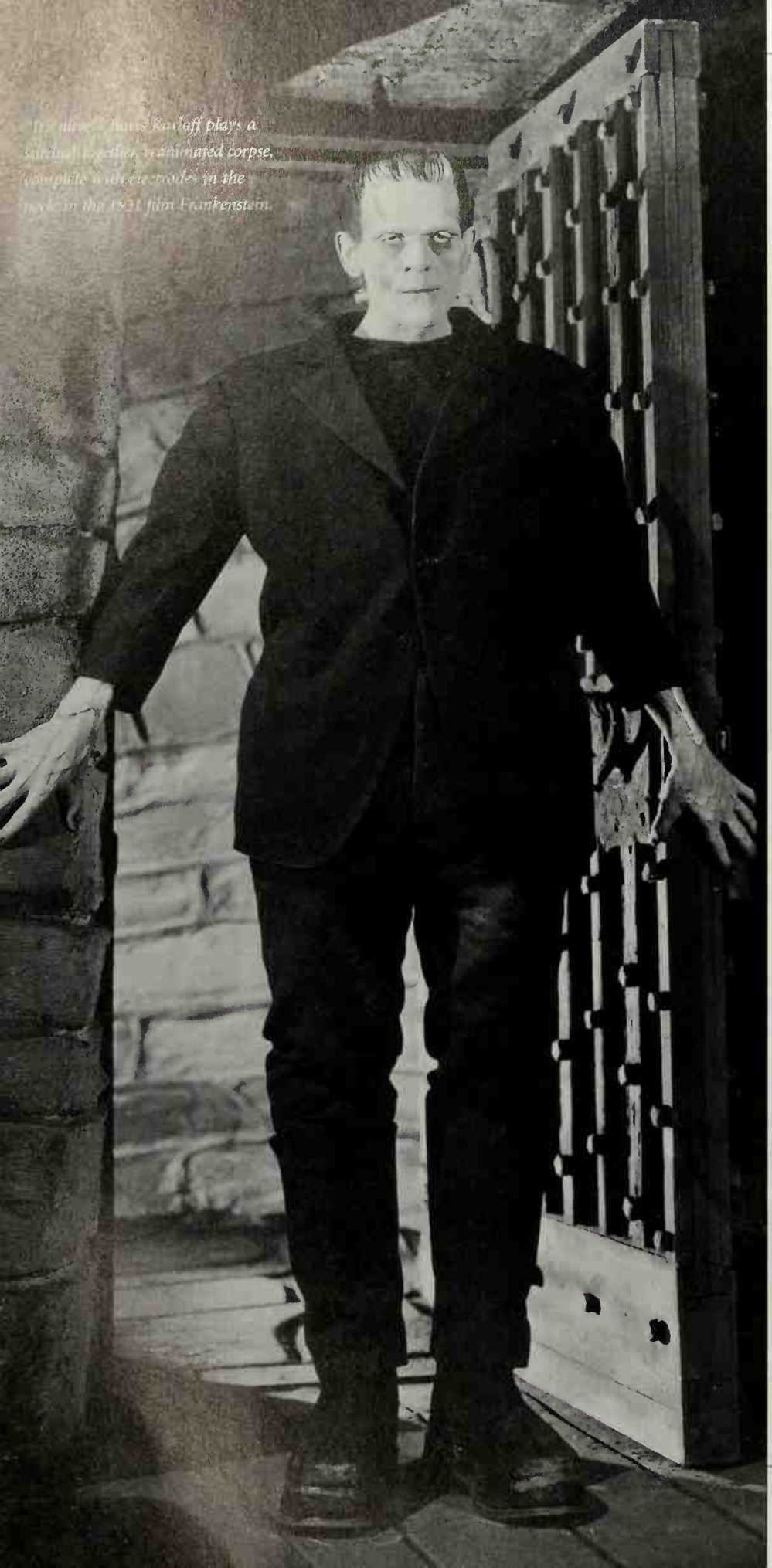
Producer-director Francis Ford Coppola, who lost 100 pounds during the arduous filming of Apocalypse Now, reviews a scene with Marlon Brando.

Captain Willard (Martin Sheen) searches for the maniacal, renegade Colonel Kurtz (Brando) with orders to "terminate with extreme prejudice."

Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore (Robert Duvall), sporting a cavalry hat, uttered the immortal phrase "I love the smell of napalm in the morning."



Kurtz's home-town army stands guard, loyal to his warped mission. A general says of Kurtz, "Every man has got a breaking point. . . . Walter Kurtz has reached his. And very obviously, he has gone insane."



[illegible] Karloff plays a [illegible] animated corpse, [illegible] in the [illegible] film Frankenstein.

Films That Tweak Fears

Inspired by folklore about vampires, werewolves, and zombies, horror movies have thrilled audiences since Hollywood's early days. Director Tod Browning made a name for himself in the genre, filming Lon Chaney in a number of silents that capitalized on the actor's terrifying visages. In the talkie era Browning introduced a new sensation, Bela Lugosi, who starred in Universal's 1931 thriller *Dracula (right)* complete with creepy sound effects.

The same year Universal released director James Whale's *Frankenstein (left)*, starring Boris Karloff. Four years later Whale followed up with the wildly eccentric *Bride of Frankenstein*, casting a weird-looking but sympathetic Elsa Lanchester *(inset)* as the monster's mate.

From *The Mummy* in 1932, which marked the directorial debut of *Dracula* cinematographer Karl Freund, through Roger Corman's low-budget '60s fright flicks based on Edgar Allan Poe stories, horror movies depicted little bloodletting. But John Carpenter's grisly 1978 hit *Halloween* and Wes Craven's 1984 slasher *A Nightmare on Elm Street* launched a trend toward graphic guts and gore.

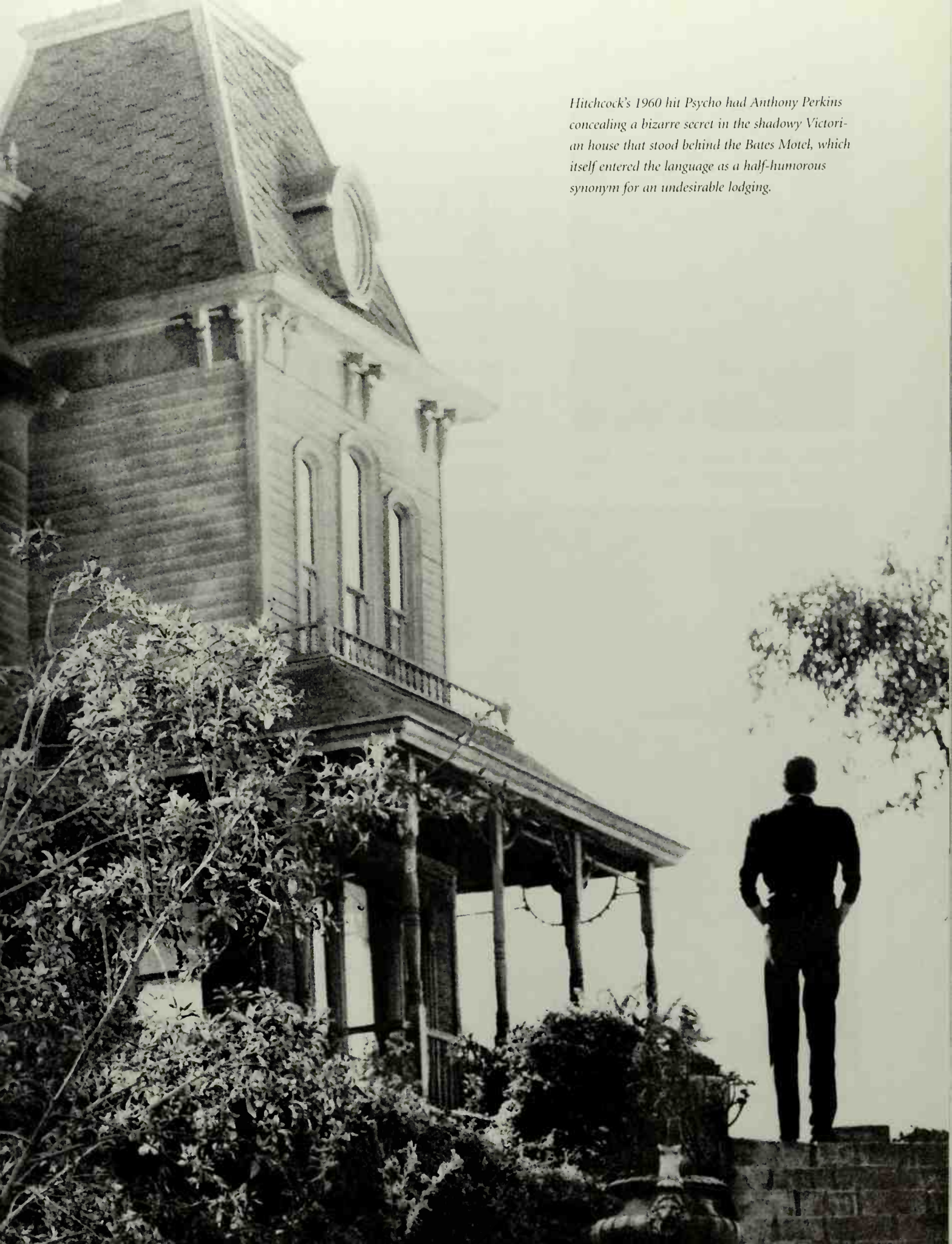
Top: Posters of early and new-generation horror flicks. Above: Bela Lugosi as Dracula carries a potential blood donor up the stairs of his castle.

Beneath posters of some of Alfred Hitchcock's top films, the jowly director is shown in a gag shot on the set of The Birds (1963).

The Master of Suspense

With their blend of intrigue, smoldering sensuality, and dark humor, the films of maestro of menace Alfred Hitchcock held audiences spellbound for six decades. Classic Hitchcock plots placed some of Hollywood's most self-possessed blonde beauties, including Ingrid Bergman, Vera Miles, Grace Kelly, and Kim Novak, in perilous situations. "I had always heard that his idea was to take a woman—usually a blonde—and break her apart to see her shyness and reserve broken down, but I thought this was only in the plots of his films," said Tippi Hedren. She learned otherwise during her physically punishing attic scene in *The Birds,* which left her needing a week of medical treatment.

At his best in films such as the 1946 spy melodrama *Notorious*, the 1954 suspense story *Rear Window,* and the 1955 thriller *To Catch a Thief,* Hitchcock probed for the evil that lurks behind benign facades. Heralded for his cinematic expertise, he used inventive techniques such as complex camera movements, montage editing, and shifting points of view. Thanks to cameo appearances he made in the majority of his movies, the portly director's profile and image became an icon. His black-and-white masterpiece *Psycho (right),* which he slyly called a "fun picture," led one critic to call the mischievous director a "barbaric sophisticate."



Hitchcock's 1960 hit Psycho had Anthony Perkins concealing a bizarre secret in the shadowy Victorian house that stood behind the Bates Motel, which itself entered the language as a half-humorous synonym for an undesirable lodging.

Beginning in the '80s, the films of director Spike Lee (above) offered a black perspective.

Mavericks of Moviedom

Director Spike Lee's surprise 1986 hit comedy *She's Gotta Have It* showed Hollywood that handling black urban themes could be profitable. A graduate of the film school at New York University, Lee offered scathing, often controversial social commentary in his movies, reaching a peak in 1989 with *Do the Right Thing,* which received an Oscar nomination for Best Screenplay. The film took a sledgehammer approach to the urban racial tensions surrounding an Italian-American pizza parlor located in a black neighborhood in Brooklyn.

In the 1992 film biography *Malcolm X (below),* Lee reexamined the life of the radical African-American political leader. Despite a running time of more than three hours, the movie showed Lee at the height of his directori-

Denzel Washington, playing the title role in Spike Lee's powerful biopic Malcolm X, preaches to a crowd outside Harlem's Apollo Theatre.

al powers, combining complex camera angles with multiple story lines in a film of epic proportions.

Controversy of a different sort surrounded the work of director Oliver Stone *(right)*. He began his film career as a screenwriter, winning an Oscar for *Midnight Express* (1978). Stone's first commercial success as a director, *Salvador,* combined elements of brutality and politics in a 1986 tale of journalists caught in an insurrectionary cross fire in Central America. That same year Stone finished the smash hit *Platoon (below)*. This account of the horrors of the Vietnam War, in which Stone had served, earning a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart, depicted gut-wrenching action and moral degradation so true to life that many Vietnam veterans hailed the movie as Hollywood's most authentic picture of their war experience. *Platoon* received the Academy Award for Best Picture, and Stone won an Oscar for his directing.

He continued his hard-hitting filmmaking with the 1989 saga *Born on the Fourth of July,* starring Tom Cruise as a paraplegic Vietnam veteran, for

Oliver Stone (above) directs the action in his 1993 Vietnam film Heaven & Earth.

The psychotic Sergeant Barnes, played by Tom Berenger, threatens a Vietnamese child in Oliver Stone's grimly realistic war drama, Platoon.

which Stone won his second Best Director Oscar. *JFK,* a 1991 film in which Stone contended that the assassination of President Kennedy had been a conspiracy among high government officials, was widely criticized as a fanciful and biased version of that tragedy and prompted the U.S. Congress to open sealed files on the assassination.

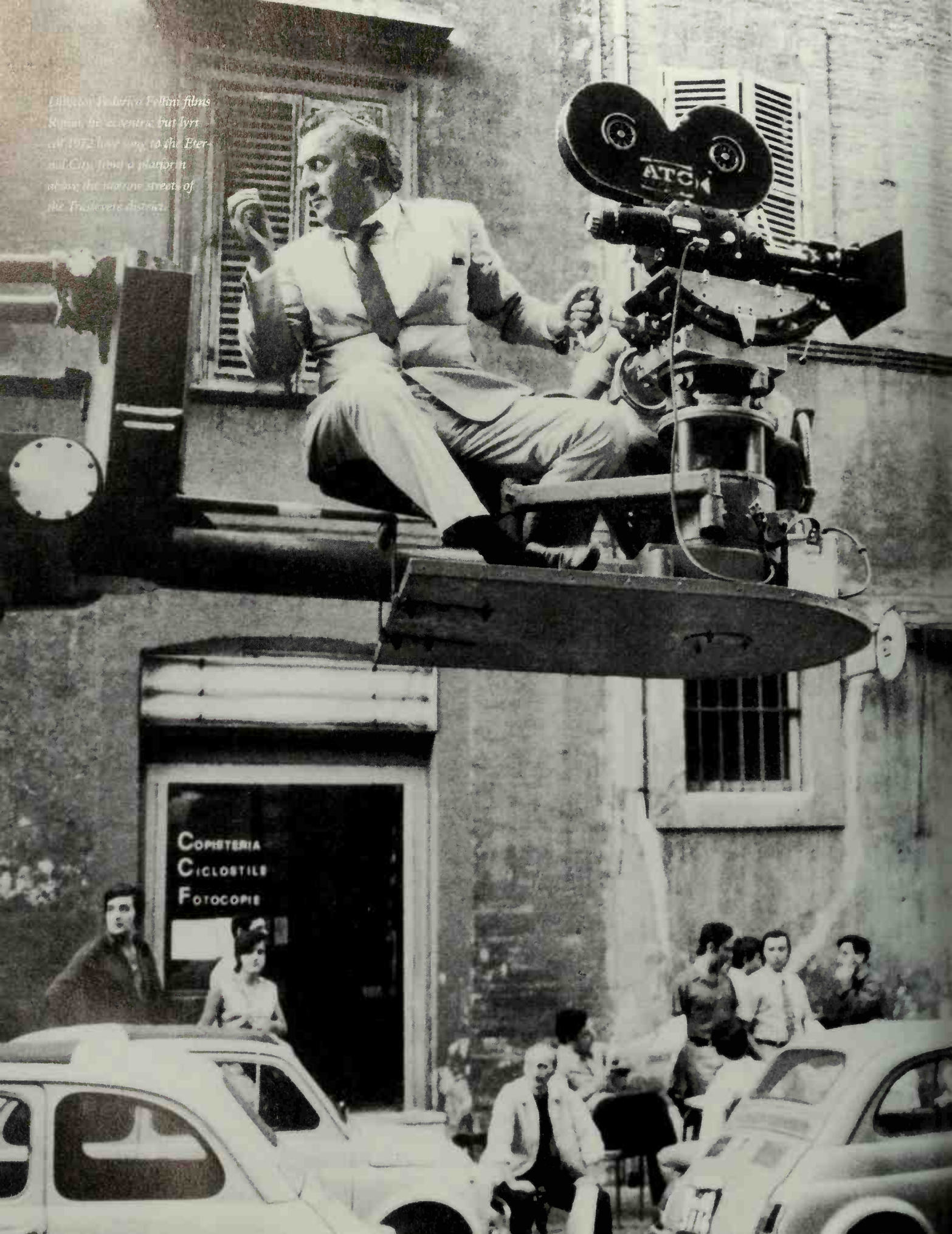
Three thought-provoking hits placed Stanley Kubrick *(right)* squarely in the forefront of the screen's most inventive directors. The blackest of black comedies, 1964's *Dr. Strangelove (below, right)* starred Peter Sellers in three roles, including a lunatic German scientist and an English officer desperately trying to avert world catastrophe. The movie marvel of 1968, Kubrick's landmark science fiction epic *2001: A Space Odyssey,* took four years to make and featured elaborate visual and sound effects. Melding space travel with theology, philosophy, and allegories on the future of mankind, the film virtually reinvented the genre.

A Clockwork Orange (1971), perhaps Kubrick's most controversial movie, painted an unsettling portrait of a future steeped in senseless violence. Both praised and damned, the film contained seductive scenes of stylized mayhem and torture that astonished some viewers and offended others. His last work before his death in 1999 was the psychosexual thriller *Eyes Wide Shut,* with Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise, who had only praise for the legendary director. "Suddenly he'll say something to you, or you'll see how he creates a shot, and you realize this man is different," said Cruise. "This man is profound."

Director Stanley Kubrick (right) choreographs a savage rape scene carried out to the accompaniment of jaunty music to advance his cynical view of a world gone mad in A Clockwork Orange. Malcolm McDowell plays the sadistic hooligan Alex.

In Dr. Strangelove, Peter Sellers as the title character—one of three different roles he played—loses control over his ex-Nazi persona in Kubrick's dark comedy about military and political folly and the Cold War's dance with nuclear catastrophe.

Keir Dullea, as Mission Commander Dave Bowman in Kubrick's visionary science fiction epic 2001: A Space Odyssey, walks through the air lock of his spaceship. Fantastic visual and sound effects, philosophical themes, and dazzling futuristic images made the film an instant classic.

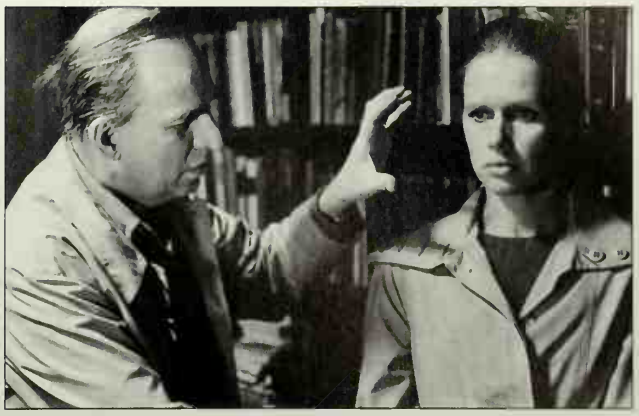


Director Federico Fellini films Roma, his eccentric but lyrical 1972 love song to the Eternal City, from a platform in front of the narrow streets of the Trastevere district.

Influences from Abroad

A group of imaginative foreign directors emerged from art house obscurity in the 1950s. Federico Fellini first made a splash with the international release of *La Strada*, a parable about lost innocence that won the Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 1956. With *La Dolce Vita* (1960), his bag of tricks spilled forth, releasing outrageous fantasies, sins, symbols, masks, and perversions. Cementing Fellini's stature as the director's director was *8½* (1963), about a director trying vainly to complete a film.

From Japan, Akira Kurosawa burst upon the scene with *Rashomon* (1950), a complex story of rape and murder. In 1954 Kurosawa directed the epic *The Seven Samurai*, and he scored again late in his career with *Ran* (1985), a colossal samurai version of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Beginning in the 1950s French directors launched new-wave filmmaking, in which the director became an auteur, giving primacy to his own visual and cinematic creativity over the "literary" emphasis of screenwriters. Films such as Alain Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) and François Truffaut's 1973 Oscar winner *Day for Night* helped make the new wave famous. Swedish director Ingmar Bergman gained an international reputation upon the 1957 worldwide release of *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*, with their surreal treatment of the themes of faith, alienation, and death.



Liv Ullmann (above) plays a coldly analytical psychiatrist confronting her own breakdown in Ingmar Bergman's Face to Face (1976).

Roberto Benigni (right) directed, cowrote, and starred in the Oscar-winning 1997 fable Life Is Beautiful, about a father who shields his son from the horrors of a concentration camp through humor, quick wits, and love.

Fellini cast his wife, Giulietta Masina, as the impish and lovable Gelsomina (left) in La Strada, his exquisitely touching tale of the relationship between a carnival strongman and a simpleminded waif.

Manufacturing the Dream

★

BEHIND-THE-SCENES MOVIE MAGIC

"I like to sweat the details," declared Steven Spielberg *(left)*, Hollywood's most successful director and producer. On the set of fantasy blockbusters like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* and dramas like *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*, Spielberg earned a reputation for stepping in to make sure that the particulars came out exactly as he wanted. During the shooting of *Amistad* in 1997, he grabbed a crewman's lantern and held it himself at just the right angle to illuminate the tortured faces of a group of slaves.

Yet even filmmakers who take Spielberg's hands-on approach still depend upon the efforts of a multitude of specialists, such as screenwriters, set and costume designers, cinematographers, sound engineers, makeup artists, stunt performers, and special-effects technicians. Stars give films their faces and voices, directors receive the artistic accolades, and producers get credit for making the whole enterprise happen—but the people listed in the closing credits, whether they create sparkling dialogue or dizzying digital effects, are essential to a movie's success.

Savvy directors fully appreciate—even relish—the work of these experts. A computer-graphics designer said of the experience of bringing dinosaurs to life for Spielberg in *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*: "He'll howl with glee if something is exciting to him, say, a person getting attacked by a *T. rex*. He just can't contain himself."

Steven Spielberg works on the set of The Lost World: Jurassic Park, undistracted by the immense model of a dinosaur's foot, a product of the vast off-camera effort required to create a movie.

Mapping Out a Movie

This excerpt from the shooting script for Gone With the Wind choreographs action and camera movements, using abbreviations like b.g. for background and assigning a number to each shot.

252 LONG SHOT - WAGON AT RAILROAD TRACK
Burning buildings in b.g. Rhett gets out of wagon, goes to horse's head, starts to pull horse bridle.

253 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT - RHETT AT HORSE'S HEAD

RHETT *(pulling at horse)* Come on! Come on! Throw me your shawl.
(he reaches out of scene)

254 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT - SCARLETT
Prissy in back of wagon. Scarlett throws the shawl.

255 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT - RHETT AT HORSE'S HEAD
He catches the shawl, ties it around the horse's head.

RHETT Sorry, but you'll like it better if you don't see anything.

256 LONG SHOT - WAGON AT R.R. TRACKS - (BURNING BUILDINGS IN B.G.)
Rhett finishes tying shawl over the horse's head.

257 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT - EXPLOSIVES IN BOXCAR
The fire is in the background.

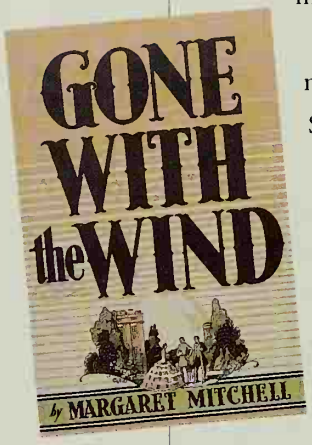
RHETT Come on, Come on!
He pulls the horse, turns the horse, and then leads him away from CAMERA.

259 LONG SHOT - EXPLOSIVES IN BOXCAR
The fire is nearer.

260 LONG SHOT
Slowly, pulling the reluctant horse, Rhett heads away from CAMERA toward the spot still clear of flame. A moment after they have disappeared through the opening, the flames reach their climax, the boxcars start to blow up, the largest building at the left end of the screen collapses, and the screen becomes a mass of flames.

Words on Paper Give Voice to a Film

The screenplay may be the most important element of a movie, providing not just memorable lines but, in the form of a shooting script *(left)*, a blueprint for filming. It is also, however, the most vulnerable element. Producers, directors, agents, and actors can all insist on changes, sometimes to strengthen a character or resolve a problem that arises during shooting, sometimes just because writing looks so easy: As screenwriter William Goldman put it, "Everybody knows the alphabet."



When producer David O. Selznick decided to make *Gone With the Wind,* he turned to playwright Sidney Coe Howard, who pared Margaret Mitchell's best-selling 1,037-page novel *(inset)* down to a cogent script. But Selznick went on to hire—and fire—a long series of other writers, including F. Scott Fitzgerald, to produce new versions of the screenplay, all the while constantly revising their work. The resulting mound of pages eventually filled an entire filing cabinet, yet when shooting began, only a fraction of the scenes existed in usable form.

For help, Selznick called in another screenwriter, the highly regarded Ben Hecht, who suggested they start again from Howard's version. The resulting effort won a posthumous Best Screenplay Oscar for Howard, who had died four months before the film's December 1939 release.

In the old Hollywood, writers rarely commanded much respect from studio executives. Jack Warner scornfully labeled them "schmucks with Underwoods," and most of them labored under contract to one studio or another, relegated to shabby, cramped offices. Their latter-day equivalents enjoy much higher prestige, as well as paychecks that can run to seven figures. And those who both direct and write, like Woody Allen and Francis Ford Coppola, wield enormous creative control.

A storyboard of thumbnail sketches, based on the screenplay, allows the producer, director, and others to visualize each scene. The sequence of sketches at top by William Cameron Menzies, production designer for Gone With the Wind, depicts Scarlett and Rhett as they flee a burning Atlanta. To create the dramatic scene (bottom), the crew assembled and set ablaze old sets from Selznick's back lot—including some from 1933's King Kong.

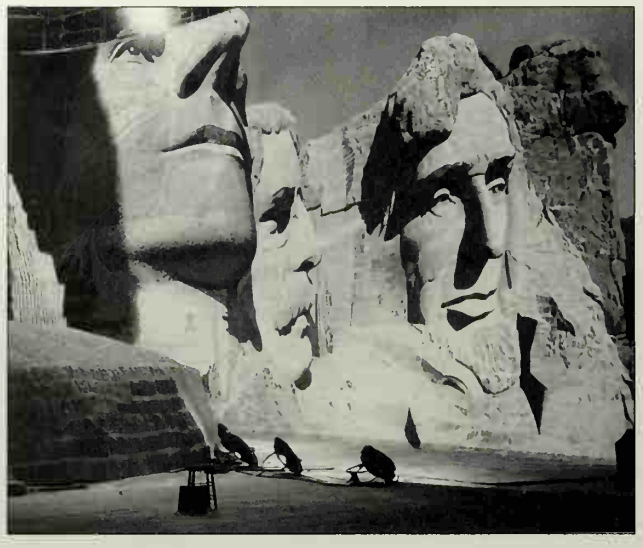
Designers Set the Scene

Robert Boyle, a top Hollywood production designer, was able to ply his trade because he knew, as he put it, "what a liar the camera can be." Boyle's job was to design the sets, select the locations, and create the right visual environment. He always sought "dramatic truth," but this, he noted, could be "very, very far from reality."

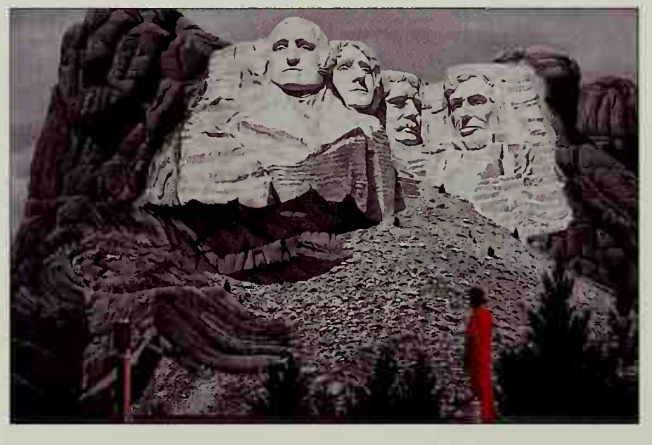
During the making of Alfred Hitchcock's classic 1959 thriller *North by Northwest,* Boyle helped the camera lie convincingly. The screenplay called for a spectacular chase across the Mount Rushmore National Memorial. But the U.S. Department of the Interior refused Hitchcock permission to film on site, and he felt in any case that he could better control the lighting on a studio set. So he had Boyle design scale-model plaster casts of the four presidents' faces instead, and viewers came away convinced they had seen the real monument.

Fooling the eye is all part of the job. A clever designer can create the illusion of a vast room while constructing only a small corner. The epic sea battle in 1959's *Ben-Hur* skillfully blends closeups of the actors in motion with footage of miniature ships floating on dyed water. Designers use such tricks of the trade whenever necessary, but their commitment to authenticity can also go to extraordinary lengths. For *All the President's Men* (1976), George Jenkins re-created not only the *Washington Post* newsroom but even the kinds of trash found in reporters' wastepaper baskets. For director Josef von Sternberg, the products of his imagination took on a certain authenticity. After creating his own sets for *Shanghai Express* in 1932, he visited China and declared the real thing disappointing.

In North by Northwest, Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint pause under Thomas Jefferson's chin (left) as they flee from villains.

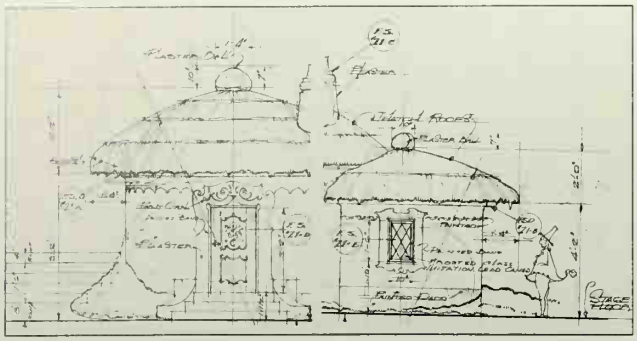


Lights illuminate a plaster replica of Mount Rushmore, built at the MGM studio after Hitchcock was denied use of the real thing.



A painted backdrop depicts the carved stone faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.

The real Rushmore makes its only appearance in this scene, filmed on location in South Dakota with Grant, James Mason, and Saint.



A drawing by artist Jack Martin Smith specifies the dimensions of Munchkin houses and the materials to be used in constructing them. The tiny mushroom-shaped cottages with thatched roofs were scaled to the size of the Munchkins—played by dwarfs in the film.

This sketch is an artist's conception of the set for Munchkinland. The mythical place consisted of 122 structures, built at one-fourth normal size and arrayed on terraces around a pool. Flowers towered 10 feet high to make the Munchkins appear even smaller.

Dorothy, played by Judy Garland, stands awestruck in Munchkinland (opposite). "I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore," she exclaims. The bridge, pool, and flowers are part of the constructed set, whereas the houses combine painted cutouts and a muslin backdrop.

A World That Wasn't. When work began on *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), the art department at MGM was considered by many the best in the business. For this movie it had to be. Although this was an era when films were shot much more often in the studio than on location—and painted sets did duty as Paris or the Himalaya—the scenery for *The Wizard of Oz* posed a special challenge: The world to be created had existed only in the imagination of author L. Frank Baum.

Bringing it to life was the task of designer William Horning, a qualified architect whom one of his assistants called "extremely practical, ferociously intelligent, and hard as nails." The original book contained no illustration of Munchkinland, so Horning had to dream the place up and then build it to the scale of its diminutive residents. Even harder was envisioning the Emerald City. As the home of the Wizard of Oz, it needed to surpass the rest of the settings in surreal magic. The head of MGM's art department, Cedric Gibbons, eventually came across an old German drawing of a fantasy city that looked like "test tubes upside down," one artist said.

Creating the sets was further complicated by the use of Technicolor. This process, still in its infancy, was cumbersome and unpredictable, and the art department had to learn a new color vocabulary. One employee spent a week finding a shade of paint for the yellow brick road that would not appear green on film. Another color-related problem, making the carriage horse in Oz turn every hue of the rainbow, was solved by using a succession of horses and sponging each one down with a different variety of Jell-O powder. The animals did, however, tend to lick off most of the Jell-O between shots.

In all, about 60 *Oz* sets were built on six different sound stages, as nearly 1,000 carpenters, painters, and other craftsmen labored frantically to stay a week ahead of the shooting schedule. On film the world they created was obviously imaginary—but still so vivid that when Dorothy gazes around and concludes, "We must be over the rainbow," generations of audiences have agreed.

Dressing the Stars with Drama

I want my clothes loose enough to prove I'm a lady, but tight enough to show 'em I'm a woman," Mae West told the designer costuming her for 1933's *She Done Him Wrong*. Edith Head complied, outlining the star's voluptuous form to such effect that she helped make the film a smash. West praised "Edith's things" for being "allurin' without being vulgar." They had, she said, "just a little *insinuendo* about them."

In a career that spanned more than half a century, Head *(at left, sketching in her studio)* costumed the stars in more than 500 films. As Paramount's chief designer at the height of the studio era, she supervised dozens of fitters, cutters, seamstresses, and milliners. Few expenses were spared: Six or eight employees might spend weeks sewing beads onto a single gown. For *The Jungle Princess* (1936) she wrapped an unknown named Dorothy Lamour in a boldly patterned sarong that became Lamour's trademark and established a new fashion on American beaches. The $35,000 mink dress she created for Ginger Rogers in *Lady in the Dark* (1944) became a Hollywood legend for its extravagance. She was still working into the 1970s, doing polyester miniskirts and bell-bottom pantsuits for *Airport* and outfitting Paul Newman and Robert Redford as dapper 1930s con men in *The Sting*.

Head saw herself, she said, as "a combination of psychiatrist, artist, fashion designer, dressmaker, pincushion, historian, nursemaid, and purchasing agent." "In her dressing room," said actress Arlene Dahl, "you had no secrets—you were stripped bare." One of Head's own secrets was to never upstage the star. She kept her appearance so plain that she once made Hollywood's worst-dressed list.

No one else came near Head's record of 35 Academy Award nominations and eight Oscars. But British

Edith Head put Grace Kelly in a fetching gilded strapless gown (sketch above) for To Catch a Thief (1955). It prompted director Alfred Hitchcock's quip, "There's hills in them thar gold!" The gown remained one of Head's favorite creations.

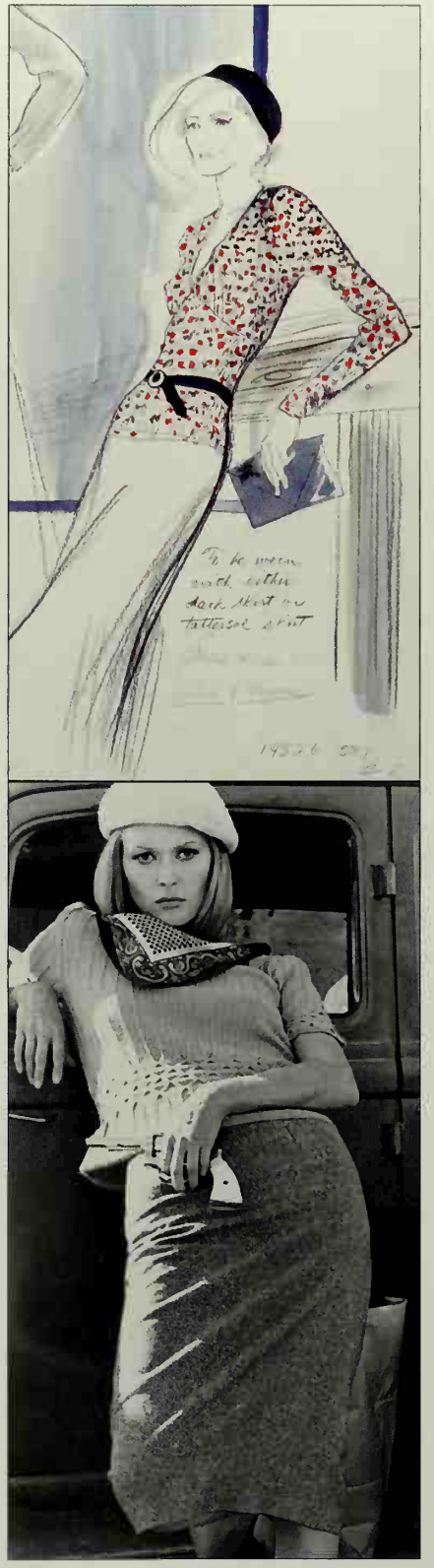
In My Fair Lady, Audrey Hepburn goes to the Ascot races in a show-stopping ensemble by Sir Cecil Beaton, whose original sketch is above. Opposite are drawings by three other notable designers, along with the stars they adorned.

designer Sir Cecil Beaton achieved a unique double-Oscar distinction with *My Fair Lady* (1964). His adornment of Audrey Hepburn *(at left)* won Best Costume Design, and his Edwardian-era sets took the award for Best Art Direction.

Director Cecil B. DeMille once declared, "I want clothes that will make people gasp when they see them. Don't design anything that anyone could buy in a store." But not every movie is a DeMille blockbuster, and designers aim for realism as often as for spectacle, making sure that the clothing suits both the character and the demands of the scene. Making Elizabeth Taylor dowdy —as Richard Burton's bickering, hard-drinking wife in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966) —required all the craft previously spent on showcasing her beauty. Her clothes were carefully cut to be as unflattering as possible, with padding added in just the wrong places. Designer Anthea Sylbert, commenting on this new kind of authenticity, stated that a film "must never be about costumes. It must always be about the characters."

Marilyn Monroe, *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954)—William Travilla

Faye Dunaway, *Bannie and Clyde* (1967)—Theadora Van Runkle

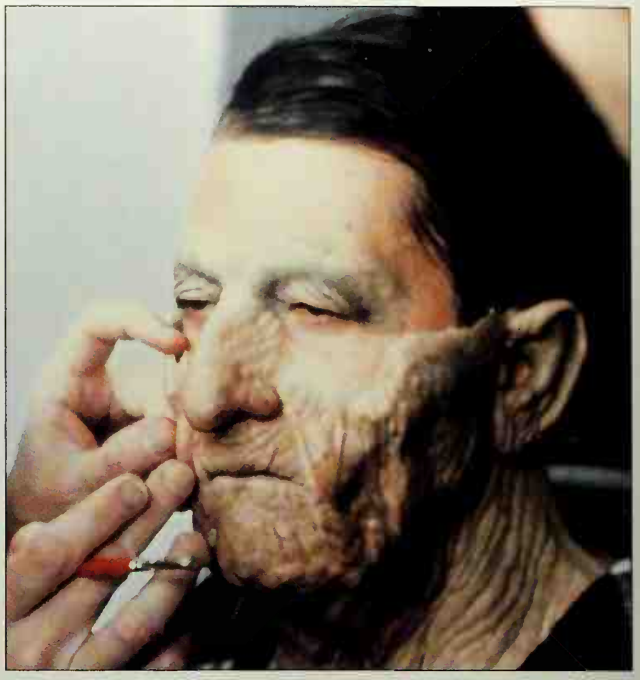


Kate Capshaw, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984)—Anthony Powell

Makeup: The Magic of Transformation

The artists who apply movie makeup usually remain faceless. The exceptions are the remarkable Westmores, a four-generation makeup dynasty whose members have become Hollywood celebrities in their own right. In 1917 George Westmore, a former wigmaker, began beautifying silent-film stars. His six sons all followed in his footsteps, and during the 1930s the makeup department of every major studio was headed by a Westmore. Three of George's grandsons continued the Westmore tradition, as did several members of the next generation.

Since George Westmore's time, the task of writing a story on the tablet of the human face has grown increasingly complex. Modern movie makeup relies heavily on prosthetics—artificial features made out of rubbery material that can add dramatic scars or wrinkles or turn a human into an alien or a monster. For *Little Big Man* (1970), makeup artist Dick Smith had to change 33-year-old Dustin Hoffman *(inset)* into a 121-year-old survivor of the Old West. Smith began by studying the faces of old men. Then, using a plaster cast of Hoffman's head as a base, he sculpted wrinkled features in clay. Molds made from each of these clay features were filled with liquid latex, which hardened into the prosthetics. This method allowed Smith to produce a fresh set of prosthetics—painted with age spots and veins—for each day's filming. It took five hours to position and glue all the pieces onto Hoffman's face and then to paint more liquid latex around the edges to blend them with his skin. The final effect was so powerful that people on the set found themselves helping Hoffman out of his chair or offering him an arm as if he really were an old man.



For his role in 1970's Little Big Man, Dustin Hoffman undergoes a lengthy makeup ordeal (above). The carefully crafted latex features that were applied to his skin weighed several pounds altogether—but the result was dramatic, convincingly turning Hoffman into a former frontiersman (right) who claimed to be 121 years old.

In 1996's The Nutty Professor, Eddie Murphy (left) played seven different roles. The title character is obese chemistry professor Sherman Klump, who tinkers with his own DNA and transforms himself into slim Buddy Love. These two characters were only the beginning for makeup artists Rick Baker and David LeRoy Anderson, who had to make Murphy over for five more parts—workout guru Lance Perkins and four other Klumps. The film won an Oscar for Best Makeup.

Among Eddie Murphy's roles in The Nutty Professor are, at left, Professor Sherman Klump and, from top, Papa, Mama, and Grandma Klump.

As makeup artists formed prosthetics for Eddie Murphy, they worked from a cast of his head and shoulders (left) and from concept sculptures of Sherman Klump's enormous body (below). One of the most daunting tasks was making the pieces of imitation fat "move and squish like flesh," as makeup artist Rick Baker put it. After a variety of experiments, Baker and his crew found that they could produce the desired effect by using condoms filled with water as one of the components of the "fat."

Capturing the Story in the Camera's Eye

"When I read a script and like the story, I respond to it on an emotional level," cinematographer Janusz Kaminski said. "I then imagine how I can enhance the storytelling through visuals." As director of photography for *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), Kaminski had the challenge of making the camera translate filmmaker Steven Spielberg's vision into reality. For its first 25 minutes this powerful World War II drama focuses unrelentingly on the carnage and chaos of the Allies' D-Day landing on the Omaha Beach sector of France's Normandy coast. After studying actual combat footage and photographs, especially the work of legendary *Life* magazine photojournalist Robert Capa, Spielberg and Kaminski decided the film should, as Kaminski put it, "look like it was shot in 16 mm by a bunch of combat cameramen."

To achieve this sense of realism, Kaminski had his camera operators shoot mostly with hand-held cameras. They simulated the frenetic quality of combat with deliberately out-of-sync shutters and special devices that shook the cameras. If water or artificial blood splattered the lenses, Kaminski said, "we kept shooting because that's what we assumed would happen in reality."

Kaminski also manipulated the lighting. Because he wanted a "kind of burned-out, bleary sky," he had the protective coating stripped from lenses for flatter contrast. Overhead silk canopies and heavy black smoke helped diminish sunlight. And to enhance the documentary look, he extracted roughly 60 percent of the color from the final negative—creating muted tones. For making the camera "a real participant in the film," as a colleague put it, Kaminski received an Academy Award for Best Cinematography.

The GIs of Saving Private Ryan struggle through enemy obstacles on Omaha Beach (right). Above, the crew prepares to shoot with a crane-mounted camera.

As scenes from Doctor Zhivago (1965) play on-screen, composer Maurice Jarre conducts an orchestra in a synchronized performance of his score for the film, which won a Best Music Oscar.

The Sound of Movies

In the days of silent film, live organ music added drama to the action on-screen. Since the advent of sound in 1927, movie scores have played the same role, enhancing the mood and sometimes providing a hit song that helps sell tickets.

The best-known modern scores are those of composer-conductor John Williams. In 1975 his ominous theme for *Jaws* sharpened the suspense of impending shark attacks—and paid tribute to Bernard Herrmann's music for the 1960 thriller *Psycho.* The sweeping orchestral odyssey Williams created for the Star Wars films almost single-handedly brought symphonic scores back into style.

A Foley artist at work

During filming, microphones also capture dialogue, which actors may rerecord later as needed. Other noises, such as a gunshot, usually come from a library of recordings. A Foley stage *(inset)*—invented by movie sound pioneer Jack Foley—provides a variety of surfaces for creating sounds. There a "Foley artist" can reproduce, for example, the cadence of a woman's footsteps on a marble floor. On the set, microphones may have been arranged to catch dialogue more clearly at the expense of such sounds; adding them back in heightens realism. Foley artists also specialize in innovative sound effects—like squeezing an open bottle of dishwashing detergent to simulate the sound of a dinosaur egg hatching.

At the mixing board in a recording studio, specialists perfect the combination of music, dialogue, and sound effects that audiences will hear on a film's soundtrack.

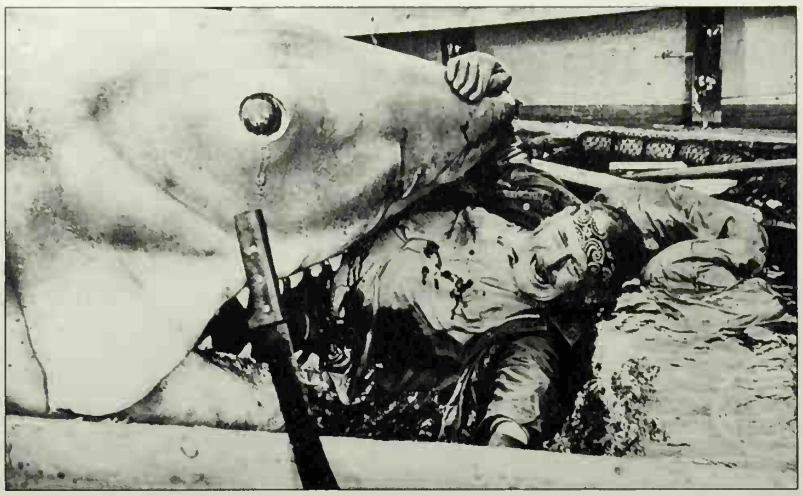
Special effects enable Fred Astaire seemingly to [illegible] right up the wall in Royal Wedding.

Believable Make-Believe

Fred Astaire *(left)* was so high on love that he defied gravity in 1951's *Royal Wedding,* climbing the walls of his hotel room and tap-dancing across the ceiling. How did he do it? The room turned upside down, not the dancer. The set—with furniture, camera, and cameraman anchored to its floor—was placed in a revolving cage that turned while Astaire danced.

This trick was Astaire's own inspiration, but usually the ideas behind such illusions come from special-effects experts. The very first of them was Georges Méliès, a French magician turned filmmaker, who in *The Conjuror* (1899) made himself and his assistant disappear.

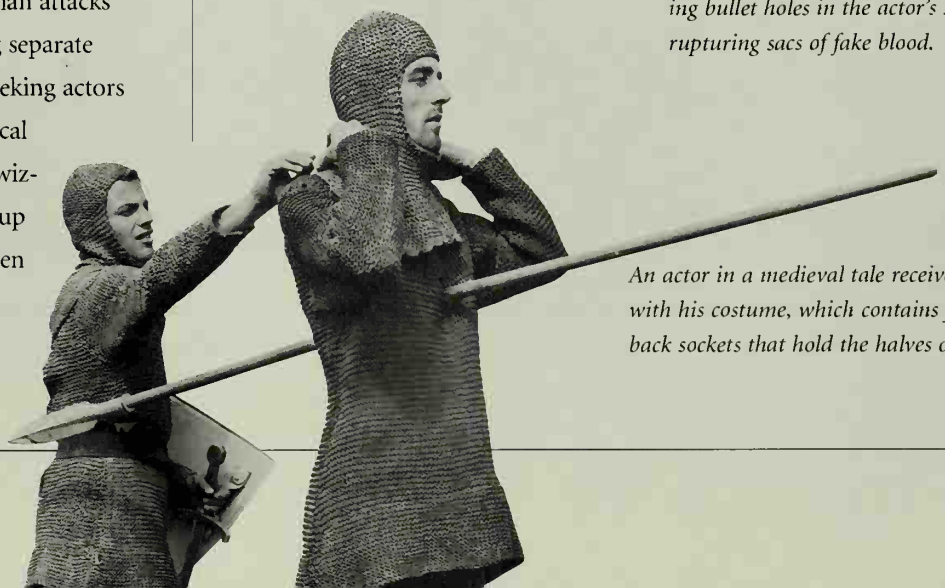
Over the next century special effects took on an ever higher level of sophistication. In *The Wizard of Oz,* MGM's legendary Arnold Gillespie "melted" the Wicked Witch of the West by standing actress Margaret Hamilton on a small patch of floor that could be lowered. As she descended, her clothing—pinned to the stationary floor around her—remained behind. Alfred Hitchcock staged frightening avian attacks in *The Birds* (1963) by blending separate footage of diving birds and shrieking actors for some scenes, using mechanical birds for others. Today's visual wizardry can make entire cities go up in fireballs, as they did when alien ships blasted earth in the 1996 blockbuster *Independence Day.*



A mechanical shark operated by air pressure devours actor Robert Shaw in Jaws (1975). Three sharks were built, all named Bruce after director Steven Spielberg's lawyer.

This lifelike dummy with a swivel neck performed the famous scene from The Exorcist (1973) in which Linda Blair's head appeared to turn 360 degrees.

A crewman for Danger: Diabolik (1967) rigs an actor with a remote-controlled device that produces the illusion of bullet wounds. On cue, caps explode, burning bullet holes in the actor's shirt and rupturing sacs of fake blood.



An actor in a medieval tale receives help with his costume, which contains front and back sockets that hold the halves of a spear.

Daredevils at Work

They hurtle through the air, catch fire, fly off cliffs in runaway automobiles, collapse under falling debris. It's all in a day's work for the men and women who perform the stunts. Modern filmmakers recall that silent-film comedian Buster Keaton did his own stunts but had a brush with death when he broke his neck in one of them—and they are rarely willing to take such risks with a star. When the scenes get dangerous, skilled daredevils step in.

Stunt coordinators try to maximize the illusion of danger on the screen while minimizing actual risk. Enormous air bags cushion falls. Special props called breakaways ease the impact of blows. The chair that crashes down on a character's head is made of soft balsa wood held together by toothpicks. Those whiskey bottles in barroom brawls are molded from paraffin. The glass window the hero smashes through is thin plastic, though for a long time the industry used sugar candy. The sound of shattering glass is added to reinforce the illusion.

Spectacular effects often result from clever tricks or optical sleight of hand *(box, opposite)* as well as human derring-do. When a car soars off a cliff, it gets an extra lift from a small ramp placed inconspicuously at the edge of the precipice. The soldier blown into the air by an exploding mine probably sprang off a hidden trampoline. The

Star Mel Gibson perches atop an upside-down coffee table on a Nevada freeway, as part of a stunt created for Lethal Weapon 4 (1998). Gibson himself performed the scene—a wild chase in which his character, police detective Martin Riggs, is dragged through heavy traffic behind a trailer truck.

laws of physics also may lend a hand. When Keanu Reeves's stunt double, Brian Smrz, jumped from a moving car to a moving bus in *Speed* (1994), he knew he would not miss if both vehicles were going at the same velocity.

One of the most perilous feats is the stunt known as the full burn. Human torches typically wear fireproof garments and face masks designed both to protect them and to help them resemble the actors they double for. They may even carry concealed miniaturized breathing equipment. A combustible substance that burns at low temperatures is painted on the protective clothing and then set afire. Crew members stand by to hose it down with carbon dioxide. One over-the-top disaster film, *The Towering Inferno* (1974), contained enough fiery deaths and plunges from skyscrapers to require no fewer than 140 stunt artists.

A stunt man hurtles from an exploding house in the Arnold Schwarzenegger thriller Last Action Hero (1993). His dramatic flight actually occurred with help from the compressed air in a hidden device, a hinged kicker ramp, which flipped him aloft.

Cut-and-Paste Action

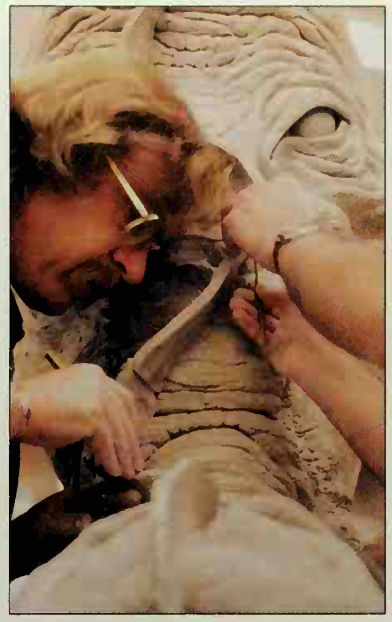
Some of the most stunning effects stem from optical trickery rather than from a stunt man's courage. One scene that electrified viewers of Die Hard 2 (1990) was actually a photographic composite. Hero Bruce Willis, as policeman John McClane, besieged by enemies in the cockpit of a grounded military plane, escapes by strapping himself into an ejection seat and punching out. The shot was achieved by cinematic cut and paste. Below, Willis, in the ejection seat, was filmed against an illuminated blue screen. This allowed the isolation of the image of Willis alone, with no background. The film of Willis was then laid over a background image of the plane exploding, leading to the final composite shot shown at bottom.

Industrial Light & Magic

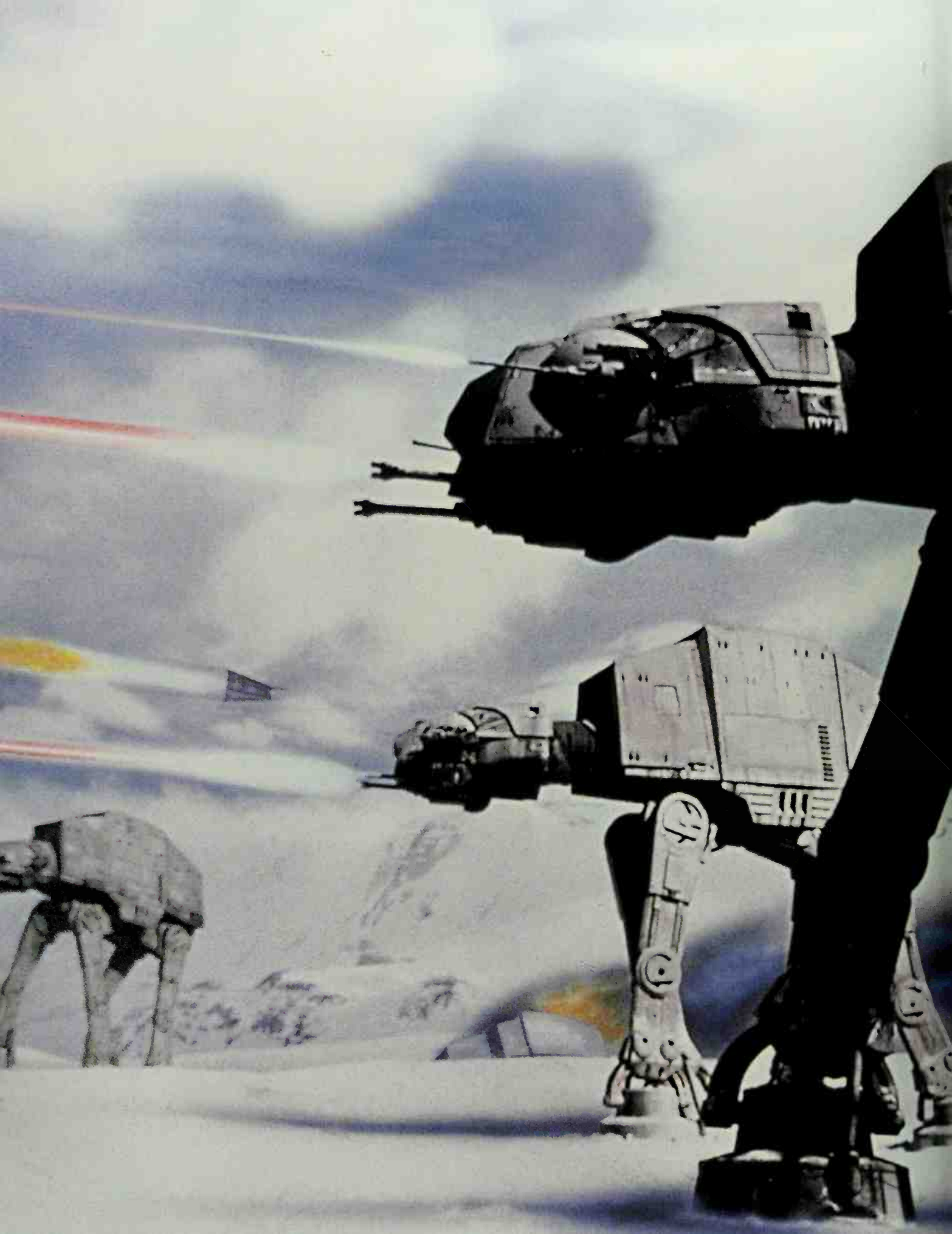
Lucas's toy box"—that's what some employees called Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), the famed special-effects shop. George Lucas—shown at left among some of his models from the Star Wars series of films—started the firm in 1975 to generate effects for the original *Star Wars* movie. He set up shop in a warehouse north of Los Angeles and hired an energetic young staff, many barely out of college, who showed up for work at all hours wearing T-shirts, shorts, and flip-flops. It was a "hang-loose atmosphere," one of the pioneers recalled. "We were a bunch of hippies, really—but highly motivated."

There and later in a facility north of San Francisco, Lucas and his crew launched a revolution in movie effects. To populate the *Star Wars* cosmos—"a galaxy far, far away"—they designed, built, and brought to life robots and other wonderfully grotesque creatures. They constructed miniature spaceships flickering with thousands of tiny window lights. On-screen these craft zoomed at warp speed in intergalactic dogfights while actually sitting still—thanks to new computer-controlled camera systems perfected by the firm *(page 135)*.

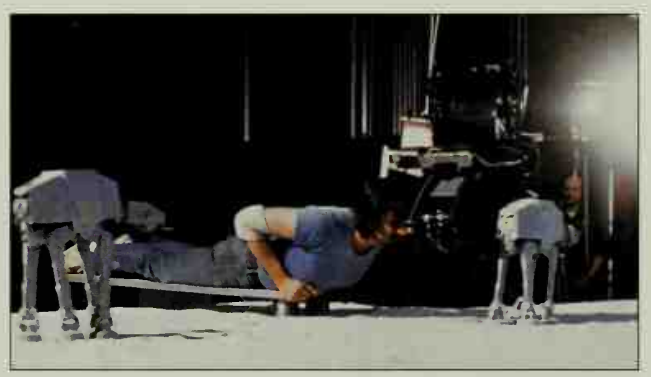
Though ILM provided effects for more than 150 films, including the Indiana Jones trilogy and *Jurassic Park*—winning 14 Oscars in the process—the Star Wars flicks exerted a special magic. For the fourth in the series, *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (1999), ILM special effects showed up in nearly 95 percent of the shots. Even before that release, Star Wars had become the most successful series ever made. Appealing across generations, through 1998 the Star Wars trilogy had grossed $1.8 billion at the box office and more than $4.5 billion in licenses for books, video games, apparel, and replicas of George Lucas's beloved toys.



Artists at Industrial Light & Magic (left) shape a plaster mold for the giant head of the character in Return of the Jedi (1983) known as Ephant Man. From the final mold filled with latex rubber emerged the completed creature—below, with friend Salacious Crumb.



Popping up on the set through a trapdoor that conceals him during filming, animator Jon Berg adjusts the position of one of the snow walkers seen in The Empire Strikes Back (1980). In ILM's stop-motion technique, the illusion of movement was achieved by filming an object one frame at a time and moving it between exposures.



Jon Berg peers through the viewfinder of a motion-control camera to line up a shot of a snow walker. The computer-operated camera allowed filmmakers to impart the illusion of motion to stationary models and to make exact multiple copies of objects and movements for the purpose of building composite images.

In a masterpiece of ILM special effects, little snow walkers (left) look immense as they stride across the screen with guns blazing in The Empire Strikes Back. This image was the fruit of stop-motion technique, motion-control cameras, and compositing—the optical magic that permits various elements to be layered into one shot.

Breakthroughs in Digital Illusion

For all the spectacular special effects of the original Star Wars trilogy, George Lucas felt frustrated. Technology could not yet translate all his fantastic visions into realistic images. But that began to change dramatically in the late 1980s with the advent of ever more sophisticated computer graphics.

Major breakthroughs in digital effects started when ILM confronted an extraordinary challenge in *The Abyss* (1989). Director James Cameron envisioned the strangest of creatures, a snakelike "pseudopod" made totally of seawater that could transform its tip into various human faces. "It had to be living," said Mark Dippé of ILM. "You had to feel that it had a mind of its own and was moving and rippling purposefully."

To create it, ILM had to vastly expand its computer hardware capabilities and employ new software. Special programs modeled the beast, augmenting a basic tube shape with such intricacies as transparent ripples and luminous reflections. One vital tool was Photoshop, a program created primarily for publishing, which enabled ILM to resize, color-correct, and alter digitized images. Still, Lucas's crew needed nine months to complete the 75-second computerized sequence—and establish an Oscar-winning milestone in digital effects.

For his next film, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), director Cameron asked ILM's computer specialists to summon forth an even more startling character, a cyborg named T-1000. The creature had to metamorphose through a series of stages, from gleaming metallic humanoid to amorphous blob of liquid metal to human form. Rapid increases in digital processing power and memory gave the technicians new possibilities for scanning existing images, composing new ones, and transferring them to film. In what one of them described as a "manic, energy-filled production with incredible dead-

In The Abyss a computer-generated creature made of seawater changes into the likeness of Ed Harris, as Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio reaches out.

Preparing for the computerized birth of T-1000, actor Robert Patrick—painted with a black grid of reference points—runs for the camera.

Given life by software using digitized images of Patrick, the gleaming T-1000 runs just like the actor, who limps slightly from an old injury.

In a spectacular sequence from Terminator 2: Judgment Day, T-1000 emerges from a wall of fire as liquid metal, which then shifts into human shape.

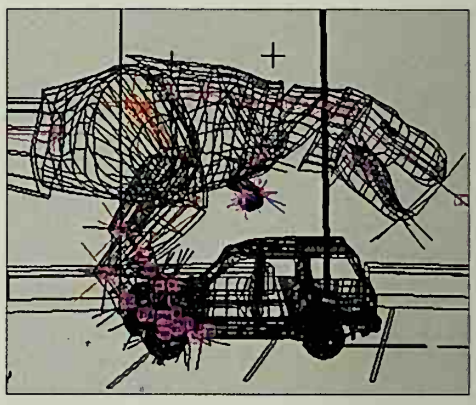
lines and pressures," ILM brought to life Cameron's cyborg in nearly six minutes of computer-generated film.

When George Lucas's old associate, Steven Spielberg, planned his 1993 adaptation of the best-selling thriller *Jurassic Park*, he anticipated using only a bit of computer graphics. He intended to rely mostly on physical models. But ILM's computer whiz kids wanted to show him that they could generate a "full-screen, in-your-face *Tyrannosaurus rex*." Their demonstration was so awe-inspiring that Spielberg wound up allotting six dramatic minutes to their digital dinosaurs, capped by the climactic battle between the *T. rex* and the velociraptors.

"The keys to filmmaking are all subliminal," said Mark Dippé. "You see a dinosaur walk by a tree and the tree shakes, you believe it's there." To get an idea of how dinosaurs moved, ILM animators observed large animals, consulted paleontologists, and even participated in dance and movement classes. With in-house software they captured the dinosaurs' every sway and jiggle, even such subtleties as the expansion and contraction of skin during breathing.

Some computer-graphics solutions brought with them new problems. The images frequently seemed too mechanical, so technicians had to add blur and grain for a more natural look. They also used electronic paintbrushes to touch up flaws in the final composites. But in one dramatic example of the power of digital effects, the head of a child actress was attached to the body of an adult stunt woman so that the child appeared to be performing the stunt. Not just animals but humans could now be built digitally.

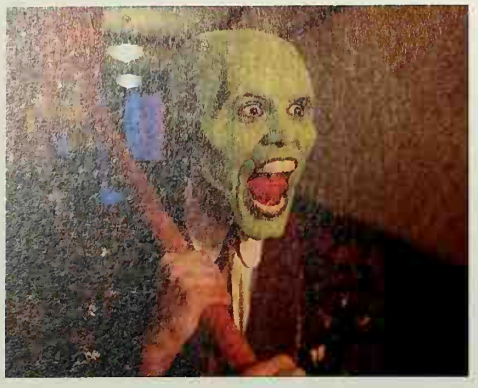
To set up a scene for Jurassic Park, actor Jeff Goldblum—in the role of mathematician Ian Malcolm—flees a charging Tyrannosaurus rex that he has to imagine is there. Before being inserted into the shot, the beast was built from scratch by computer.



Beginning its creation of a T. rex, the computer produces an image representing a three-dimensional wire-frame skeleton of the six-ton beast. Using special software, the creators later added muscles, surface texture, and other features.

During film editing (above), the computer integrates the evolving digital creature with live action. This compositing process combines two separate images—the three-dimensional wire model and the so-called background plate of the fleeing actor.

The final composited shot, which wound up on the cutting room floor, brings together a Tyrannosaurus rex and a terrified Jeff Goldblum.



In The Mask (1994), Jim Carrey plays a bank clerk whose body changes to a kind of Silly Putty when he dons a mysterious mask. The filmed image above provides the background plate.

With eyes popping, a computer-generated wireframe figure is composited over the filmed background plate of Carrey. Computer images exaggerated the actor's own facial contortions.

In the computerized figure, Carrey's tongue and eyeballs extend hugely. In other scenes, his figure explodes and—when commanded by a cop to "freeze"—drips with icicles.

In the final composite, the film of the real Jim Carrey and his popeyed computer caricature merge seamlessly in a bizarre digital union of reality and illusion.

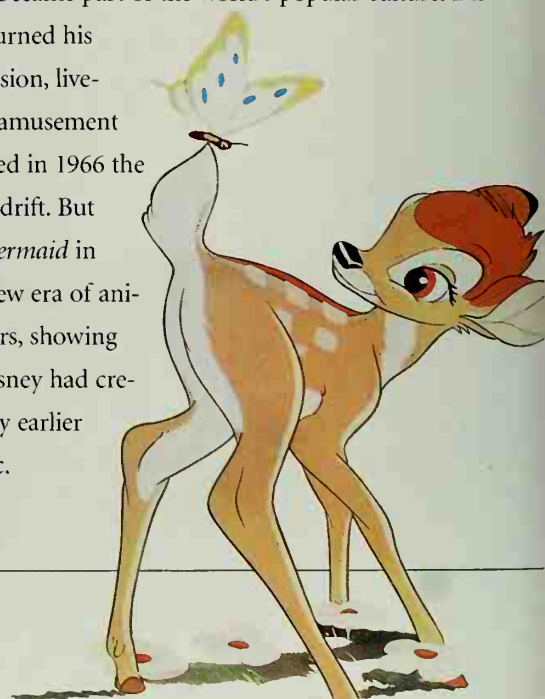
Walt Disney acts out a scene from Pinocchio (1940) for his staff. Disney routinely introduced ideas through such performances, which often, one animator said, would "kill you laughing, they were so funny." His presentation of the Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs story reportedly moved the room to tears.

Master of Animation

"It's not just a cartoon," Walt Disney once exclaimed about a project. "We have new worlds to conquer here." Animation was a primitive art in 1920 when Disney, then 18, got started. Eight years later he brought his chosen field into the age of sound with *Steamboat Willie*—the cartoon that launched Mickey Mouse *(right, bottom)*. By 30, Disney was one of Hollywood's biggest names, having won an Oscar in 1932 for *Flowers and Trees,* the first full-color cartoon. Competing animators were awed by his studio's beautifully executed work: "The giraffes ran like giraffes and the chipmunks and squirrels scampered like chipmunks and squirrels," one artist said admiringly.

In 1934 he began a three-year project that skeptics labeled Disney's Folly—the first feature-length animated film. Audiences nationwide were dazzled by *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,* with its enthralling story, winning characters, irresistible music, and lavish, unprecedented detail. Immense labor went into making Snow White move with realism and grace, determining how shadows should fall, and adding glistening effects to jewels and soap bubbles.

Disney's spare-no-expense approach carried over to the studio's later films. Lead characters like Dumbo *(inset, top)* and Bambi *(inset, bottom)* became part of the world's popular culture. Disney successfully turned his attention to television, live-action films, and amusement parks. After he died in 1966 the studio seemed to drift. But with *The Little Mermaid* in 1989 it began a new era of animated blockbusters, showing that the world Disney had created half a century earlier still held its magic.



Fantasia, 1940

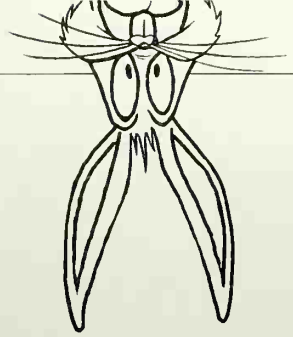
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

The Little Mermaid, 1989

The Lion King, 1994

Disney Classics

Mickey Mouse, as the Sorcerer's Apprentice, makes the stars dance in Fantasia; Snow White's dwarfs sing "Heigh Ho"; Ariel, the Little Mermaid, frolics in the sea; and a sacred ceremony marks the birth of Simba and Nala's cub in The Lion King.



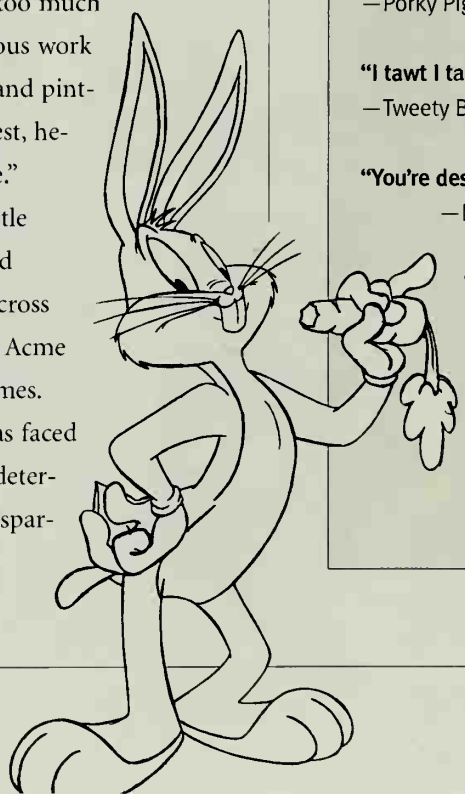
Merry Mayhem at Warner Bros.

For those who found Disney's world a little saccharine, there were Warner Bros. cartoons: fast, ferocious, and very funny, they had a wisecracking tone and relentless mayhem that nicely matched with Warner Bros. gangster flicks playing on the same bill. As storyman Michael Maltese recalled, "We wrote cartoons for grownups."

The Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies series began in the 1930s, and by the next decade its anarchic, cheeky style was in full bloom: Anvils fell on heads, dynamite exploded while being held, and characters obliviously dashed off cliffs. Warner animators working on minuscule budgets produced some of the six- to seven-minute epics in a dilapidated, malodorous building fondly known as Termite Terrace. Yet gifted directors like Tex Avery, Friz Freleng, Chuck Jones, Bob Clampett, and Robert McKimson turned out a thousand-cartoon body of work that remains unmatched in animation history.

Warner Bros.' first enduring character was chubby pink Porky Pig *(inset)*. He was joined later by Bugs, the unflappable, smart-aleck bunny with the Brooklyn-Bronx accent. The "scwewy wabbit," always too much for befuddled Elmer Fudd, also made short but hilarious work of antagonists like Daffy Duck, the Tasmanian Devil, and pint-size, high-decibel Yosemite Sam, "the roughest, toughest, he-man stuffest hombre that ever crossed the Rio Grande."

Sylvester the cat's vain quest to make a meal of little Tweety sustained dozens of Warner Bros. cartoons, and Wile E. Coyote continually chased the Road Runner across stylized desert landscapes, betrayed time and again by Acme brand products and his own ever more crackpot schemes. The loquacious southern rooster Foghorn Leghorn was faced with a very different foe: a tiny young hawk, Henery, determined to catch his first chicken no matter what the disparity in their sizes.



Man of a Thousand Voices

The legendary Mel Blanc (above, with a carrot for a Bugs Bunny sound effect) supplied the voices for almost all the major Warner cartoon characters. The most taxing was Yosemite Sam's holler, he said, and Sylvester's sputter left his scripts "covered with saliva." A medical specialist told Blanc that he had throat muscles like those of Enrico Caruso.

"Ehh, what's up, doc?"
—Bugs Bunny

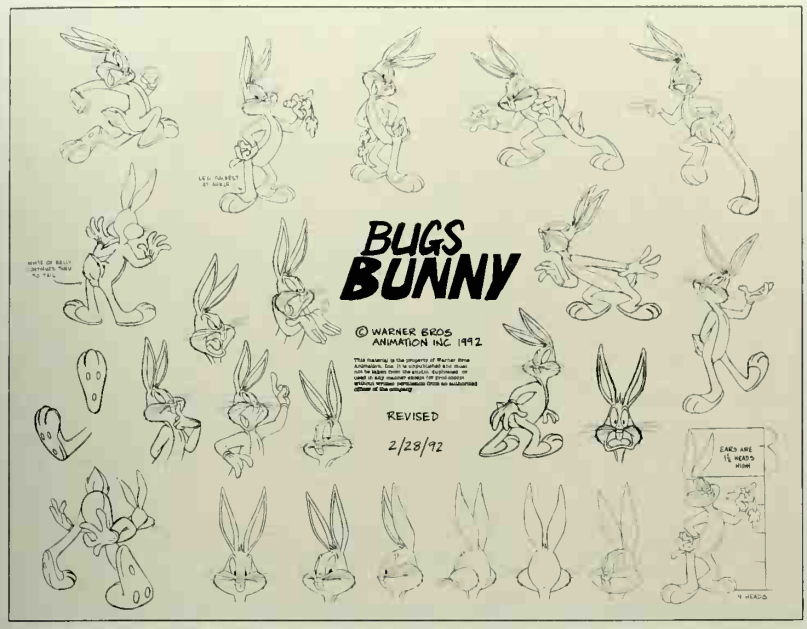
"Th-th-that's all, Folks!"
—Porky Pig

"I tawt I taw a puddy tat!"
—Tweety Bird

"You're despicable!"
—Daffy Duck

"Be vewy, vewy quiet!"
—Elmer Fudd

"Ah say, Ah say, Son!"
—Foghorn Leghorn



Model sheets like this one helped animators maintain a consistent look for each character. Bugs Bunny kept a consistent attitude as well. From his debut on, he was, Friz Freleng said, "so cocky he wasn't afraid of a guy with a gun who was hunting him."

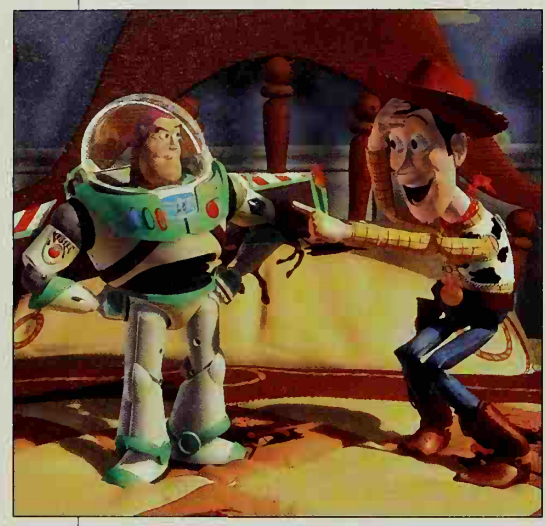
"Sufferin' Succotash!" Sylvester is in trouble with Granny again. Continually bested by Tweety, the cat also stood little chance against Speedy Gonzales, "the fastest mouse in all Mexico," or Hippety Hopper, the diminutive boxing kangaroo.

Bugs and Yosemite Sam appear on a cel by Friz Freleng (top). Animators would ink each moment of action onto a sheet of celluloid, lay it over a painted background (center), and capture the combination (bottom) on film. This scene is from High Diving Hare—in which Sam's half of the diving platform falls, while Bugs remains suspended in air. This violates the law of gravity, "but," Bugs says, "I never studied law."

The Next Generation of Animation

As technology evolved, so did animation. In 1988's *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*—starring Bob Hoskins as a 1940s detective, and cartoon character Roger Rabbit as a murder suspect *(right)*—Disney and Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment blended the animated and real worlds seamlessly. "If Roger comes into a room and sits down on a big chair, you should see the cushion go down and a puff of dust," Spielberg said.

After live-action sequences were filmed, animators crafted drawings to fit precisely into the footage. Cartoon characters had to hold real objects in a believable way. To match each movement of the camera, drawings needed to shift perspective subtly. Layers of highlight and shadow made the animated figures seem three-dimensional or created other effects, such as the shimmer of a sequined gown worn by sultry Jessica Rabbit.



An even bigger breakthrough was 1995's *Toy Story,* the first feature film animated entirely by computer. The story of Woody *(inset, right)* and Buzz *(inset, left),* toys who compete for their owner's affection, required four years of work from Disney and computer-graphics studio Pixar. Programmers and animators created computer models for every character, setting, and object. Then they designed surface "textures" for each model to make this virtual world convincingly tactile.

In *Snow White,* Walt Disney created animation's first realistic human characters; *Toy Story* did the same in the realm of computer animation. The two lead toy characters received a high level of realism as well, with carefully nuanced facial expressions. "For the audience to believe in them, Woody and Buzz have to look like they're thinking," Pixar's John Lasseter said. *Toy Story* had a happy ending, winning both a special Academy Award and box-office success.

Bob Hoskins, as private eye Eddie Valiant, wrestles with his cartoon client in Who Framed Roger Rabbit. During filming, Hoskins had to play most of his scenes against imaginary costars.

Kids and Animals

★

HARD ACTS TO FOLLOW

"Never work with kids and animals," warned W. C. Fields. "They'll steal your best scene with their behind to the camera." The grumpy comedian knew what he was talking about. Movie audiences found it difficult to resist a noble dog like Lassie or a lovable pig *(inset)*. But if Hollywood's critters often upstaged their grown-up human costars, children were even bigger scene stealers.

At first producers were slow to catch on to this phenomenon, and youngsters in film served largely as props. By the 1930s, however, child stars shone so brightly in the movieland firmament that ambitious mothers were besieging the studios, dragging along a kid who was sure to be the next little person to make it big.

The one who made it biggest of all had a dimpled smile and precisely 56 corkscrew curls. For four years in a row, beginning in 1935 when she was seven years old, Shirley Temple *(right)* outdrew every other Hollywood star at the box office. Her sunny on-screen optimism was infectious, buoying the spirits of a nation mired in the Great Depression. She could sing. She could dance. She was impossibly cute. And she was such a quick study that she always remembered her lines—and didn't shy away from prompting her adult fellow actors if they forgot theirs.

Two babes who made the grade in Tinseltown: Above, a talking pig had the title role in Babe (1995). At right, sipping milk, Shirley Temple was America's image of wholesome goodness during the mid-1930s.

Temple was a natural. At age two she was keeping time with her feet to music on the radio. At three she was enrolled in dancing school, where a talent scout discovered her. Before she was four she had her first film contract, making one-reelers. In 1934, when she turned six, she made no fewer than eight feature films and was awarded a special miniature Oscar for bringing "more happiness to millions of children and millions of grownups than any child of her years in the history of the world."

Such was her popularity that Temple's studio, 20th Century-Fox, maintained a staff of 19 writers to develop scripts for her. These screenplays typically featured treacly plots, but if the films were forgettable, Temple never was. "Sparkle, Shirley, sparkle!" her mother would remind her. And for 15 cents at their neighborhood theaters Americans could watch that sparkle and momentarily forget their woes. It was no wonder that she was photographed more than anyone in the world, including her adoring fan President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

By the time she reached puberty, Temple had earned three million dollars and saved the studio from bankruptcy. Only then did she learn that she was actually 13, not 12; her parents and the studio had shaved a year off her age to make her seem even more precocious. By then her best days on the screen were behind her.

In a reversal of the usual filmland scenario, Temple was succeeded as Hollywood's most popular child star by someone who was actually older than she—a teenager with the stage name Mickey Rooney *(right)*. Born Joe Yule Jr. into a vaudeville family in Brooklyn, Rooney made his stage debut, playing a dwarf, when he was scarcely out of diapers. In 1926, at age six, he appeared in his first movie, and his freckled face soon became familiar in such films as *Boys' Town* and *Captains Courageous*. He made the first of 15 Andy Hardy films in 1937, playing an all-American adolescent with such verve that he was number one at the box office three years running.

Unlike Temple, Rooney stayed in show business. In an up-and-down career spanning three-quarters of a cen-

"Don't ask me how she does it. You've heard of chess champions at eight and violin virtuosos at 10? Well, she's Ethel Barrymore at six."

Costar Adolphe Menjou on Shirley Temple

In the famous malt-shop scene from Love Finds Andy Hardy, Mickey Rooney as Andy and Judy Garland as the girl next door share one soda with two straws. Between 1937 and 1943 Rooney and Garland made a total of nine films together—five of them musicals.

Opposite: Shirley Temple and favorite dance partner Bill "Bojangles" Robinson tap a classic sequence in The Little Colonel. Robinson said, "God made her just all by herself—no series, just one."

tury, he had roles in 189 films. "I've been coming back like a rubber ball for years," he said. "I couldn't live without acting."

Rooney's frequent costar, Judy Garland *(page 151)*, was also the offspring of vaudevillians. Born Frances Gumm in Minnesota, she sang with her two older sisters in the unsuccessful "Gumm Sisters Kiddie Act." But when she was 13 her emotive voice so impressed Louis B. Mayer of MGM that he signed her to a contract—the first person in the studio's history to be signed without a screen test or sound test. Twice she was cast opposite Rooney in teenage pictures before she found her unforgettable role as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz (right)*.

Garland was MGM's second choice for the role of the Kansas girl flung by a tornado into the Land of Oz. The studio wanted Temple but could not work out a deal with 20th Century-Fox. Garland was 16 when filming started in 1938. To mask her maturing figure and make her fit the role of 11-year-old Dorothy, the studio strapped her into a corset and bound her breasts. Later, the effort of maintaining the slender look demanded by Hollywood bedeviled Garland throughout a brilliant and troubled adult career that included such classics as *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *A Star Is Born*. Amphetamines she took to lose weight paved the way for alcohol abuse and, finally, death at age 47 from an unintentional overdose of sleeping pills.

Natalie Wood meets Santa

Playing Garland's young sister in *Meet Me in St. Louis* was Margaret O'Brien, who became the major child star of the 1940s. Even at seven, Margaret knew how to turn on the emotional spigot. But just to make sure he got copious tears during a key scene, director Vincente Minnelli once took the youngster aside before shooting and told her that her dog had been killed by a car. It worked. O'Brien's roles belonged to the long Hollywood tradition of childhood innocence exemplified by Shirley Temple. Nine-year-old Natalie Wood, as Susan Walker *(inset, above)*, worked the same vein in *Miracle on 34th Street*. In that classic, released in 1947 and shown practically every Christmas since then, little Susan's

In The Wizard of Oz, Dorothy (Judy Garland) ministers to the Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr) as the Tin Man (Jack Haley) and the Scarecrow (Ray Bolger) watch.

skepticism about the existence of Santa Claus is transformed into fervent belief.

After World War II, screen roles for children began evolving with the rapidly changing times. The new screenplays reflected a more realistic view of childhood, stripped of some of the contrived if endearing charm of little Shirley tap-dancing or Judy in the Land of Oz. In *The Parent Trap,* 15-year-old Hayley Mills—daughter of British actor John Mills—showed a shrewder aspect of adolescence, portraying twins *(below, right)* who trick their separated parents into reconciling.

In *Paper Moon* (1973), a natural con artist who smoked, cursed, and bilked lonely widows out of their money was nine-year-old Tatum O'Neal *(left).* Teamed up with a traveling swindler, played by her real-life father, Ryan O'Neal, she demonstrated that more than the old innocence was gone. Unlike Temple, who remembered everyone's lines, O'Neal had to be bribed to learn hers. But she delivered them so persuasively that she won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress. One of the other nominees that year was 14-year-old Linda Blair, for her chilling performance in *The Exorcist.*

As roles available to child actors changed, so did the youngsters' treatment in the media. Intimate matters that once would have been hushed up, such as Garland's pill problems, became the everyday stuff of TV and tabloids. Perhaps the first child star to endure such exposure was Patty Duke. At 16 her performance in *The Miracle Worker* (1962) as the young Helen Keller *(above, right)*—blind, deaf, and mute—won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. But along with the accolades came reports that she threw temper tantrums on the set—and her life off it proved no less troubled. Her father, who left home when she was six, was an alcoholic. Her mother had to be hospitalized repeatedly for mental illness. As a teenager, Duke herself drank heavily, suffered from manic-

Tatum O'Neal puffs away in Paper Moon. The actress admitted she had already been smoking secretly for three years.

Helen Keller (Patty Duke) takes a lesson from her teacher, Annie Sullivan (Anne Bancroft), in The Miracle Worker. Duke and Bancroft were reprising roles that had won them acclaim on Broadway.

With the help of cinematic sleight of hand, Hayley Mills portrays twin sisters Susan and Sharon in the 1961 classic The Parent Trap.

Anna Paquin and Holly Hunter won Oscars for their roles in The Piano. Hunter was Best Actress; Paquin became, next to Tatum O'Neal, the youngest winner of the Best Supporting Actress award.

Ten-year-old Macaulay Culkin is adept at demonstrating fear—and cunning—when confronted with burglars in Home Alone (1990).

depressive illness, and was, she later charged, sexually abused by her managers.

The media also went to town on 10-year-old Macaulay Culkin. The hilarious difficulties he encountered in the hit *Home Alone (below, left)* paled alongside the highly publicized feuding that followed in his real-life family. Culkin, who earned an estimated $50 million in his first five years as a child star, retreated from the movies while his parents waged a bitter fight over custody of him and his six siblings; he then married at the age of 17.

In kids' roles, too, the kid gloves were off. Increasingly, children were being cast in R-rated films that, by law, they were not even allowed to view in theaters. Many of these roles demanded a new range of acting abilities. In 1994, 11-year-old Anna Paquin of New Zealand took the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in the passionate 19th-century drama *The Piano (left)*. Paquin had to develop a Scottish accent and learn to interpret the gestures through which her mute screen mother communicated. Yet her only previous acting experience had been the role of a skunk in a school play.

Unprecedented roles as child prostitutes were played by Brooke Shields and Jodie Foster. Both began their professional careers precociously—Shields as a baby model, Foster as the bare-bottomed three-year-old in a suntan-lotion commercial. Both played 12-year-old prostitutes—Shields in *Pretty Baby* (1978), Foster in *Taxi Driver* (1976) *(right)*. Both actresses later went to Ivy League universities—Shields to Princeton, Foster to Yale. Shields later starred in her own TV series, *Suddenly Susan*. Foster went on to win two Best Actress Oscars and to direct her own films. Appropriately, when she appeared in front of the camera as well as behind it in her directorial debut, *Little Man Tate* (1991), she played the mother of a child prodigy.

Jodie Foster, 13, plays a child prostitute in Taxi Driver. In her next films she was a gangster's moll and a murderer.

ROOMS
ROOMS

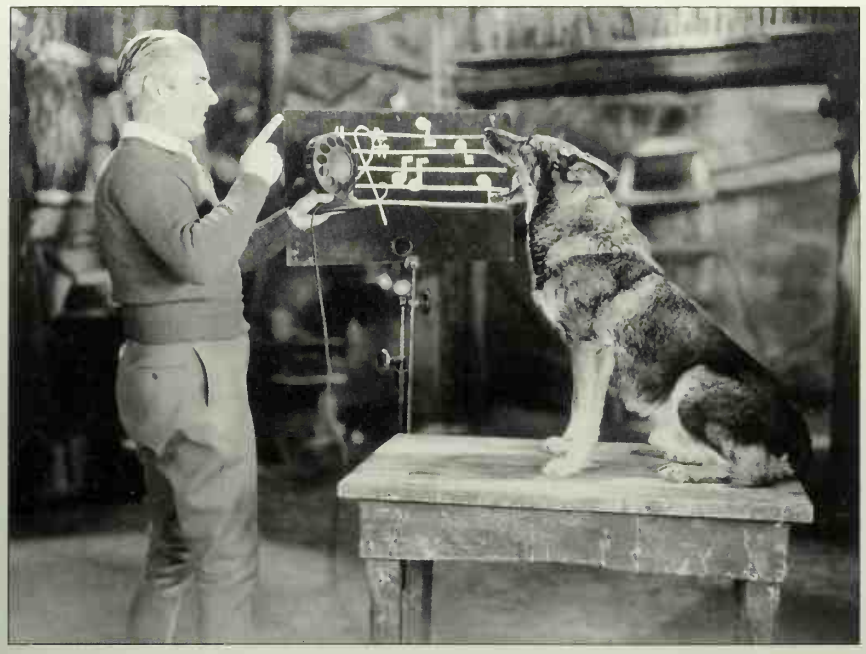
A Menagerie of Matinee Idols

Hollywood's first animal superstar was a refugee German shepherd *(opposite, top)*, saved from a bombed-out building in France during World War I. His rescuer, Lee Duncan, an American pilot, named him Rin Tin Tin after a character in a popular French story and taught him hundreds of tricks. Audiences flocked to his debut in the silent adventure film *Where the North Begins* (1923). His 21 subsequent movies were so popular that "Rinty" single-pawedly brought Warner Bros. back from near bankruptcy. Two of his descendants would follow him into the character in films, and a successor appeared in TV's *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*. But none could top the original. At the height of his nine-year career, Rinty lived in a mansion across the street from Jean Harlow and received more than a million pieces of fan mail annually.

Pete the Pup *(below)* was the featured canine of Our Gang, the series of short comedies produced between 1922 and 1944. Pete, a gentle pit bull terrier, first joined the gang of mischief-loving kids in 1927. He had a distinctive ring around his right eye that had been applied with liquid dye for another movie and would not come off. Over the next decade, as many as a dozen different terriers played Pete, and all of them wore the trademark eye-encircling paint. Audiences scarcely noticed that on all dogs but the first, the circle shifted back and forth between eyes—sometimes in the same film. "We just painted the ring around whichever eye would show it off the best," producer Hal Roach said. Whenever trouble loomed for his young comrades, each Pete would perform his primary trick: As if to say "Oh no, not again!" he would lie down, put his paws over his head, and close his eyes.

The best-known animal performer of all, Lassie *(right)*, was actually a female impersonator. The script for *Lassie Come Home* had called for a female collie, and a pedigreed female was cast in the role. But when the starring canine refused to go near the water in a critical scene, the director summoned her stand-in, Pal, a male with a somewhat questionable résumé. Pal's first owner had hired trainer Rudd Weatherwax to break the dog of chasing motorcycles and chewing up furniture, then let Weatherwax have him in lieu of payment. But when opportunity knocked, Pal came through. He swam the swollen stream,

Pete the Pup lines up with members of Our Gang. The circle around his left eye shows he is not the original Pete, whose right eye had the ring.



Taking a sound test in 1929, Rin Tin Tin shows he is ready for the talkies. Many of his fellow silent-screen stars could not make the switch.

"We can't even house-break him. Do you think you can train him?"

First owner of Pal (Lassie) to Rudd Weatherwax

The original Lassie was paid more for his work in the 1943 classic Lassie Come Home than his 11-year-old costar, Elizabeth Taylor.

Peggy the chimp drapes an arm around Ronald Reagan, her costar in Bedtime for Bonzo.

emerged from the water, and, instead of shaking himself as any normal, red-blooded dog would, slumped down exhausted on cue. He got the role and shared the screen with two other promising newcomers—Roddy McDowall and Elizabeth Taylor. Pal starred in seven Lassie films. Later, five generations of his descendants—all male—played Lassie in movies or on TV.

Other animal stars have made their mark in comic roles. In *Bedtime for Bonzo* (1951), a chimpanzee named Peggy *(left)* became the only animal ever to share top billing with a future president. Ronald Reagan played a psychologist who raises a chimp to prove that environment rather than genes shapes behavior. Reagan found Peggy "adorable to work with" but unpredictable: She once grabbed his necktie and nearly strangled him.

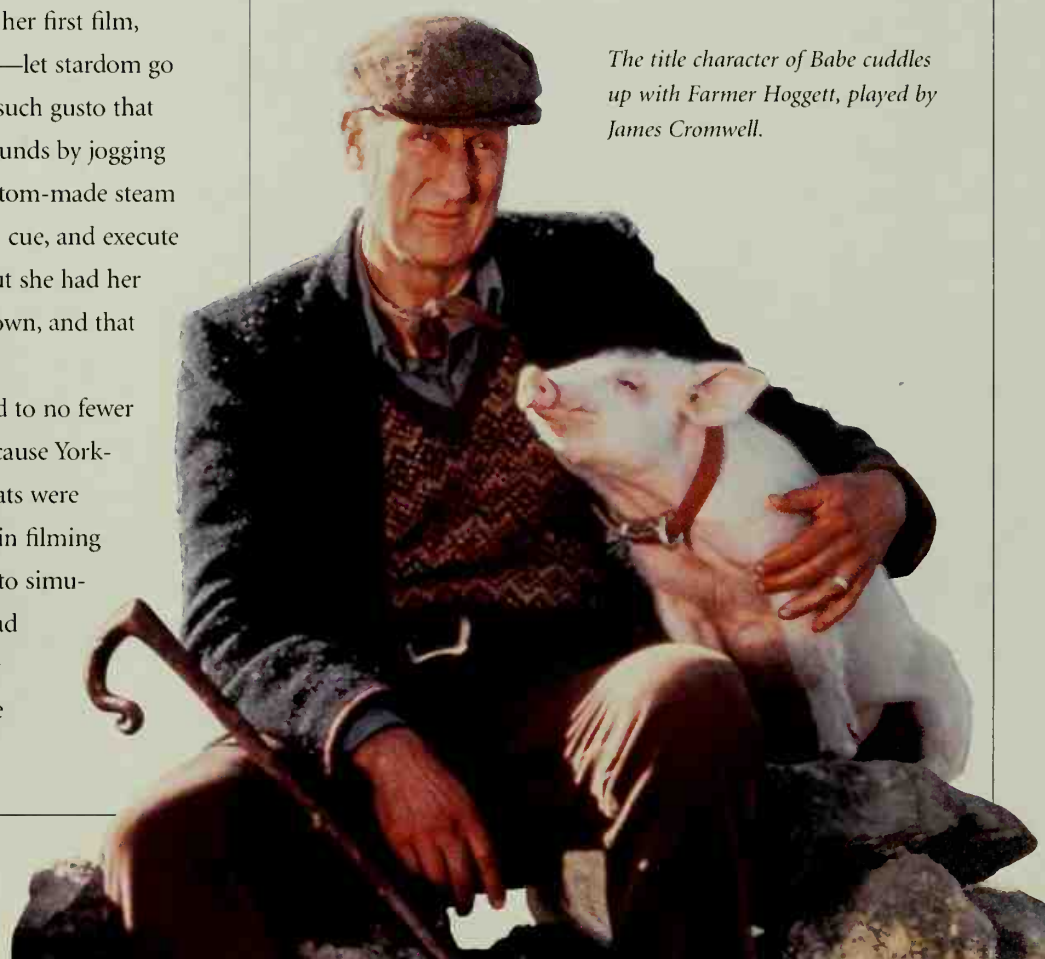
Francis the Talking Mule *(right, top)* dispensed advice to Donald O'Connor and other human costars in seven films during the 1950s. His voice came from the veteran character actor Chill Wills, an old mule skinner who knew the critters so well he sometimes ignored the script and adlibbed Francis's dialogue. The mule's lips moved because the trainer manipulated them with thread or by pressing the muscles on the side of the head. After her first film, Francis—in reality a female named Molly—let stardom go to her head. She put on the feedbag with such gusto that for her next movie she had to lose 200 pounds by jogging the Hollywood hills and sweating in a custom-made steam cabinet. Molly could climb stairs, wink on cue, and execute almost all of the other necessary tricks. But she had her standards; she stubbornly refused to sit down, and that feat had to be performed by a stand-in.

The title role in *Babe* (1995) belonged to no fewer than 48 different white Yorkshire pigs. Because Yorkshires grow so quickly, four-week-old shoats were trained in groups of six so they could begin filming about 12 weeks later. Each wore a toupee to simulate the tuft of dark hair on Babe's forehead *(right)*. Animatronic clones and computer graphics created facial expressions and the

Francis the Talking Mule (Molly) advises fellow sailors Donald O'Connor and Martha Hyer in Francis in the Navy (1955).

"What trick is there to talking? Any fool can do it."

Francis the Talking Mule, in *Francis Joins the Wacs* (1954)



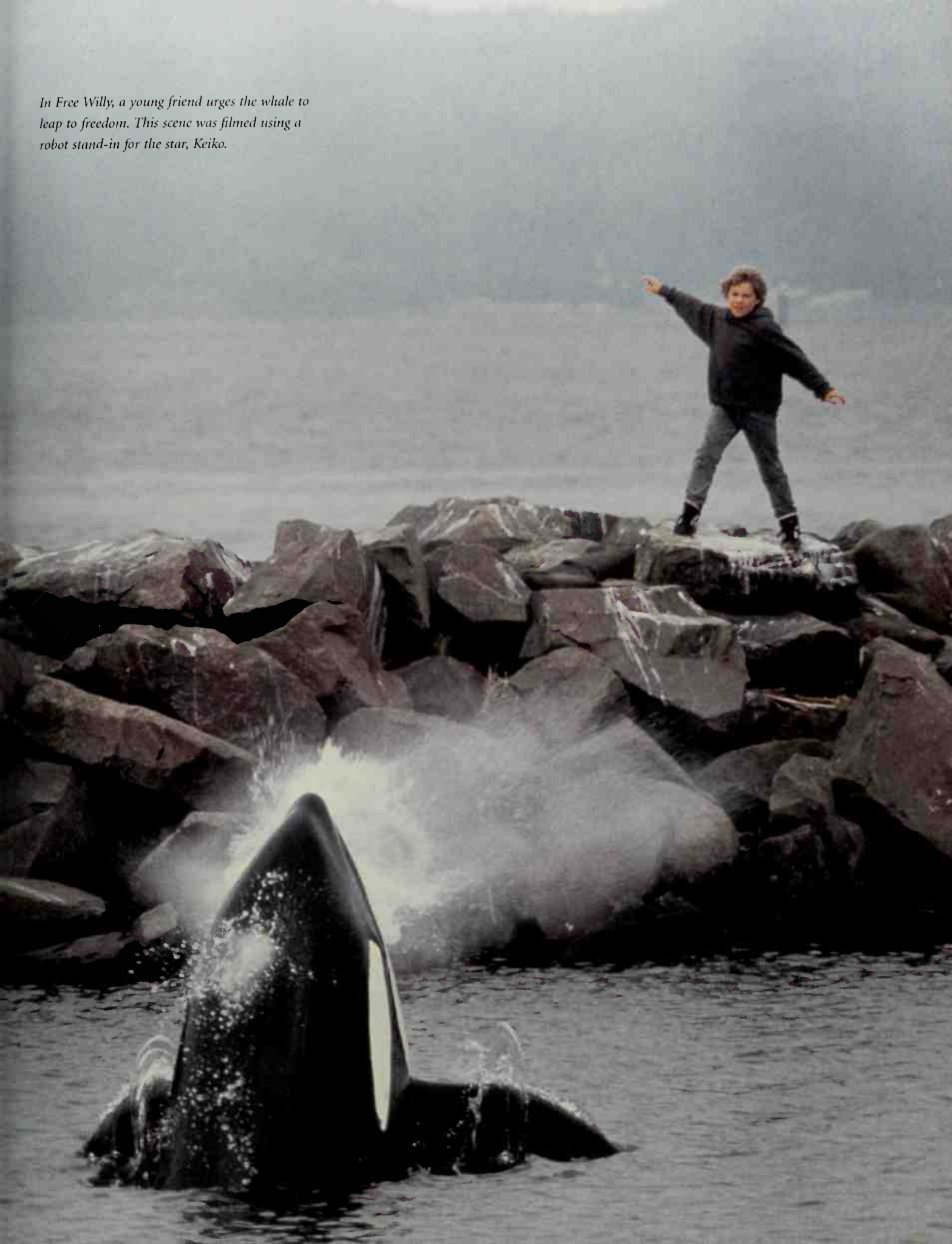
The title character of Babe cuddles up with Farmer Hoggett, played by James Cromwell.

appearance of speech for Babe and the 800 other animals cast in this charming fable.

During the 1990s, animal films tended to reflect environmental concerns. *Fly Away Home* (1996) grew out of the experiences of Canadian artist Bill Lishman, who taught a domesticated flock of geese how to migrate by leading them south to winter quarters in an ultralight plane. In the film, Anna Paquin, Academy Award winner for *The Piano (page 156),* finds an abandoned nest of goose eggs and becomes surrogate mother to the goslings. When it is time to migrate, they don't know where to go, but Anna shows them the way in a little goose-shaped aircraft *(below).*

Life imitated art in the saga of Keiko the killer whale—star of *Free Willy* (1993). In the film, Keiko plays Willy, a captive in an amusement park with an unscrupulous owner. A 12-year-old boy helps the whale gain his freedom *(right).* In real life, it turned out, after the film was shot Keiko was returned to a seaquarium in Mexico City, where he lived in a cramped, filthy pool, lost weight, and developed a severe skin disease. An exposé in *Life* magazine touched off a worldwide campaign to rescue Keiko. Millions of dollars in contributions poured in, and the Free Willy-Keiko Foundation was formed to return the whale to the North Atlantic near Iceland, where he had been captured in 1979. Keiko was airlifted in 1996 to a rehabilitation facility in Oregon, where he recovered, gained weight, and learned to hunt. Two years later he was flown to Iceland to move into a new temporary home in a huge floating pen. Nylon mesh sides enabled him to acclimate to the ocean around him as he underwent preparation for release into his native waters.

Piloting a goose-shaped ultralight aircraft, Anna Paquin leads a flock of Canada geese on their first migration south in Fly Away Home.



In Free Willy, a young friend urges the whale to leap to freedom. This scene was filmed using a robot stand-in for the star, Keiko.

The Lights in Hollywood's Sky

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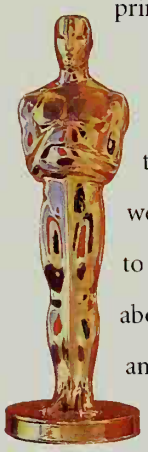
CELEBRATING THE STARS

The headline in the November 21, 1913, issue of the showbiz newspaper *Variety* reported a new phenomenon—an outrageous one, in the minds of the studio bosses of the day: "Picture Actors Are Asking for Names on the Screen." Farsighted in many ways, the pioneer movie moguls nonetheless did not yet perceive that their business would ride to riches primarily on star power.



Although those early actors had not asked for much, the process of celebrating them—once it began—did not stop at mere recognition. Smiling or sneering into the camera, they were a new kind of popular hero. After their names became as well known as their faces, Americans were willing—indeed, eager—to pay not only to watch their work but also to see pictures of them at play and to read and hear about their lives and loves and frailties and follies. The actors were now called stars, an apt celestial metaphor, for as they stood before the camera they were literally suffused with light and seemed to sparkle. Hollywood's galaxy became as familiar as the night sky and equally out of reach. And like the heavens in perpetual movement, they were in a constant process of change—in one film beggar, in another prince.

With their fame the stars reaped almost unimaginable wealth, adulation, and, for some of the serious actors among them, a token of recognition almost equally valued—an Oscar *(inset)*.

The very essence of that elusive something called star quality, 26-year-old Elizabeth Taylor exudes a smoldering sexuality as Maggie in the 1958 film version of Tennessee Williams's Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

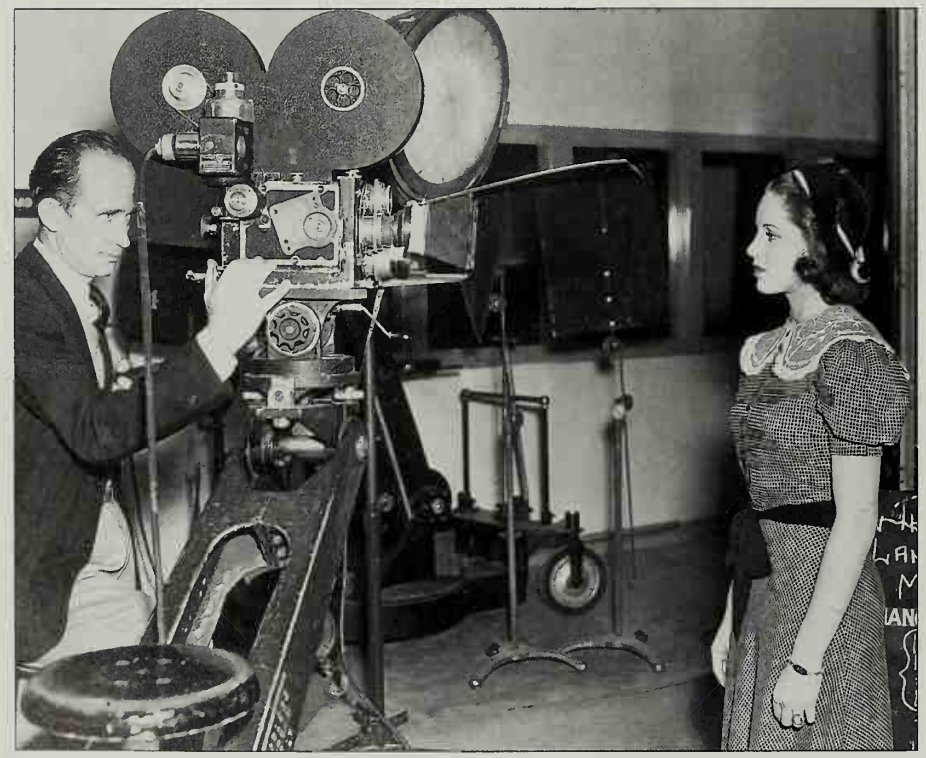
The Making of a Movie Star

Almost from the beginning, the possibility of film stardom exerted a gravitational pull on American youth. Although some of the biggest Hollywood names—James Stewart and Katharine Hepburn, for example—came from the stage, for thousands of hometown prom queens and handsome quarterbacks, the promise of a life in the movies was irresistible. They dreamed of being "discovered." Few ever were, but just one story like Lana Turner's was enough to keep the dream alive. She was spotted at 15, cutting school, sipping a Coke—although not in Schwab's Drugstore, as legend would have it—by Billy Wilkerson, publisher of the *Hollywood Reporter.* Asked if she'd like to be in pictures, she replied simply, "I'll have to ask my mother."

The fortunate few who survived the compulsory screen test—and sometimes the notorious casting couch—were taken in hand by the strong arm of the studio. There they were made, and made over, into images. Restyled, renamed, buffed to dental perfection, and tutored in makeup, voice, and comportment, an Iowa farm girl might come off the assembly line a glamorous temptress in a skintight gown.

Thus reconfigured, new stars went into the studio inventory and were protected from mishap with great care. "You can't imagine how the studios cosseted us in those days," said Robert Taylor, born Spangler Arlington Brugh in Filley, Nebraska. "They had to. If we weren't looked after and guarded, the fans would tear us to pieces."

The fans were ravenous indeed, and to gratify their insatiable curiosity, the publicity function expanded beyond



A sunbonnet set amid her auburn curls, Julia Jean Turner, 16, stands before the camera for her 1937 screen test (left). By the time she starred as the seductive but cold-blooded wife in 1946's The Postman Always Rings Twice (right), Lana Turner had made the real-life journey from virgin to vixen.

The Hollywood publicity machine would manage to crank out only one prize graduate from this 1949 class of starlets—but what a one: With her wistful vulnerability, Marilyn Monroe seems to project the most affecting—and genuine—expression.

the control of the studios into a journalistic genre of its own. No one better represented the power of the celebrity press than the newspaper columnists: Walter Winchell, Hedda Hopper *(inset)*, and Louella Parsons. Hopper and Parsons—rival scoopsters, gargoyles of gossip—became Tinseltown celebrities in their own right; Winchell was an American institution.

Because Parsons and Hopper together had a daily readership of 75 million people—more than half the U.S. population in the 1940s—they had tremendous power. A favorable mention by either was an incalculable boost to an actor's career; a slight could end it. Hopper candidly referred to her Beverly Hills mansion as "the house that fear built." Winchell wielded vast influence in political as well as entertainment circles. Once, accosted by an angry film fan, he cried, "You can't talk to me that way! I'm God!"

Hedda Hopper

After *Life* magazine was launched in 1936, it soon came to seem that the magazine and Hollywood were made for each other. Many would-be stars found that publicity shots taken by *Life*'s staff photographers could help them win that all-important first part. And many of the magazine's most popular covers *(right)* featured the screen's best-known faces.

The end of World War II brought changes to Hollywood. The studio system began a period of decline from which it would never recover. New actors came on the scene, many trained by top acting coaches in New York. Independent, schooled in theory, and less obsessed with the tinsel than their predecessors, stars such as Marlon Brando, James Dean, Paul Newman, Dustin Hoffman, and Joanne Woodward eschewed the usual contrivances of mainstream publicity. Gone were the fantasies concocted by studio press agents. The new breed insulated themselves with entourages of assistants, pressed for creative control of their

Whether featuring a supernova or an ingenue, Life always found a fond place for the movie star portrait. During its 36 years as a weekly, the magazine devoted 290 covers to Hollywood royalty.

This controversially racy 1943 publicity still of Jane Russell reclining in a haystack made her a sensation before her first picture, The Outlaw, was released.

Almost engulfed in a sea of lenses, Sean Penn, Robin Wright Penn, and John Travolta (foreground, from left) show various reactions at the Cannes film festival. Constant intrusion by the media was a fact of life for the stars, a trade-off for fame.

projects, and frequently produced and directed their own films instead of acting under the direction of others.

But Americans still wanted to see behind the dark glasses. The public's interest in the stars' private lives became, if anything, a greater obsession than ever. And, in the relatively forthright spirit of the times, many stars were surprisingly candid in their self-revelations. For a long time the job of conveying the stories to the public remained the province of the magazines. *Life* ended its weekly run in 1972, but two years later *People* arrived to fill the gap.

Later, magazines like *Vanity Fair* and *Entertainment Weekly* added impetus to the trend, elevating celebrity to a fetish. With a seemingly inexhaustible supply of uninhibited and insanely rich young stars eager to tell—and show—all, the magazines published fresh and often audacious interviews and cutting-edge pictures by photographers who were famous in their own right. Coverage of film stars began to be given equal weight with articles about world leaders, captains of industry, and aristocrats.

With seemingly no end in sight to the public's craving for the lowdown on the stars, television got into the act with nightly entertainment-news programs, followed soon after by countless sites on the World Wide Web. Internet users could get the purported inside dope on their favorite stars—everything from latest love affair to choice of shampoo.

Whether they were the studio-controlled glamour pusses of Hollywood's golden age or the independent-minded actors of a latter day, the stars' appeal remained the same. With their wealth, their pure visual impact, and their fame, movie stars gave their fans vicarious access to dreams, a high-flying slice of life to titillate an earthbound audience.

"More Stars Than in the Heavens"

In the days when each studio had its roster of actors under contract, MGM used the headline above as a slogan. Those days are long gone, but the stars still shine. Some of the best known adorn these and the following pages.

Laurence Olivier
Hamlet, 1948

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope
The Road to Morocco, 1942

Spencer Tracy
The Old Man and the Sea, 1958

Henry Fonda
The Grapes of Wrath, 1940

Humphrey Bogart
The African Queen, 1951

Gregory Peck
Twelve O'Clock High, 1949

Jack Lemmon
The Odd Couple, 1968

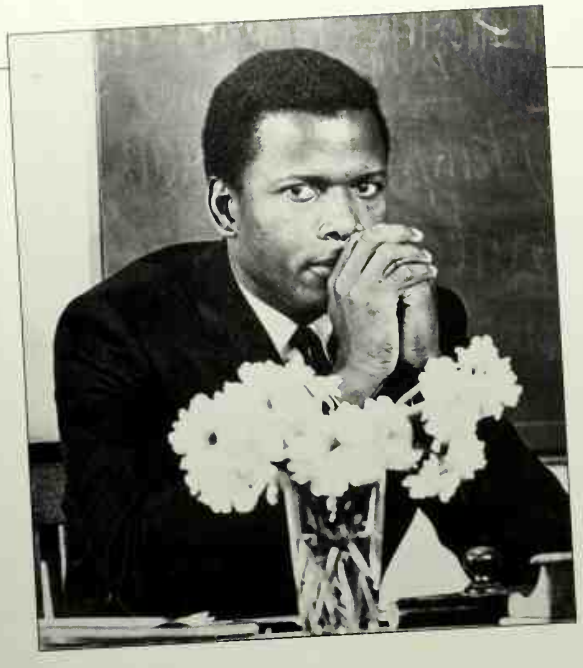
Kirk Douglas
Lust for Life, 1956

James Dean
Giant, 1956

Burt Lancaster
Elmer Gantry, 1960

Marlon Brando
The Wild One, 1953

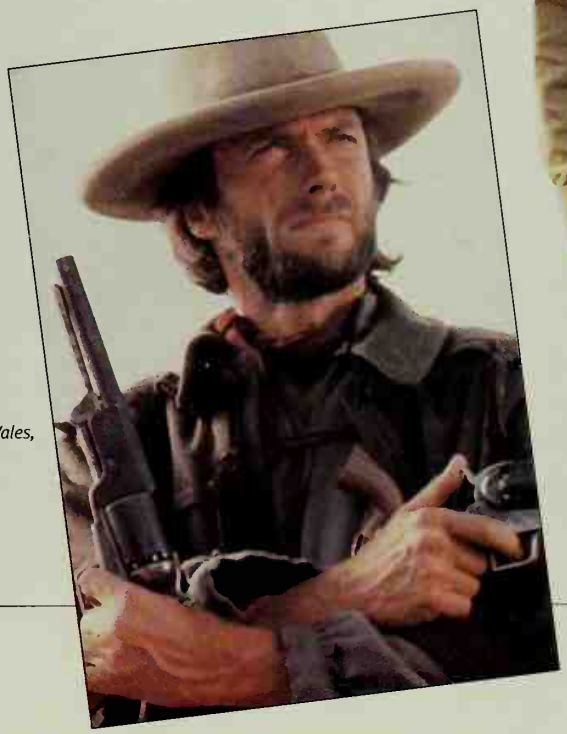
Robert Redford and Paul Newman
Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, 1969



Sidney Poitier
To Sir, With Love, 1967

Al Pacino
The Godfather Part II, 1974

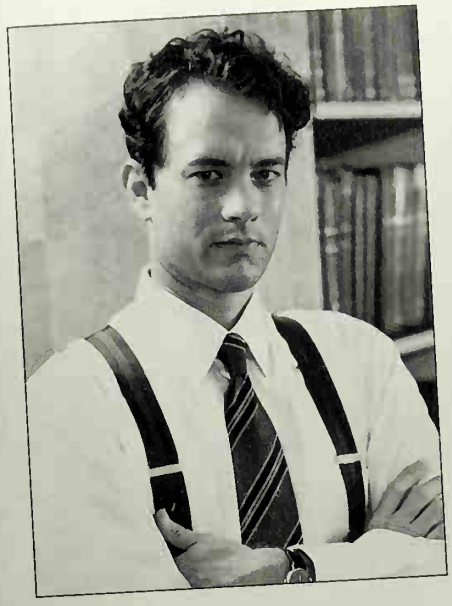
Jack Nicholson
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, 1975



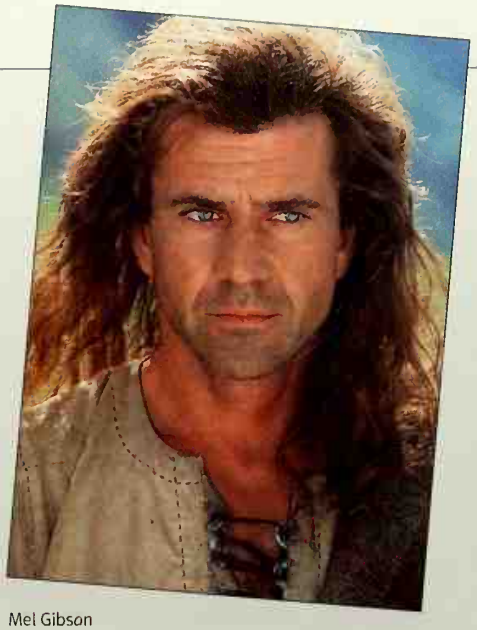
Clint Eastwood
The Outlaw Josey Wales, 1976

Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise
Rain Man, 1988

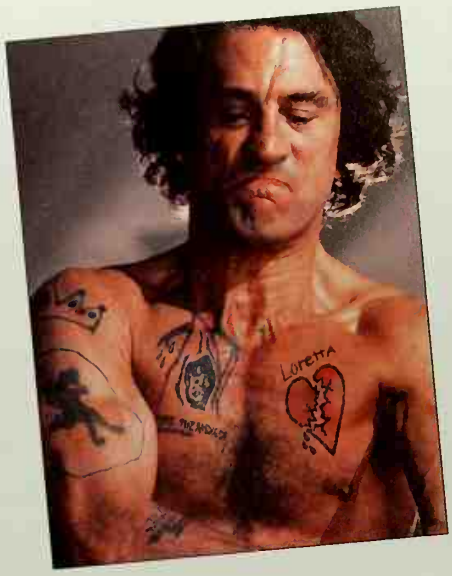
Denzel Washington
Devil in a Blue Dress, 1995



Tom Hanks
Philadelphia, 1993

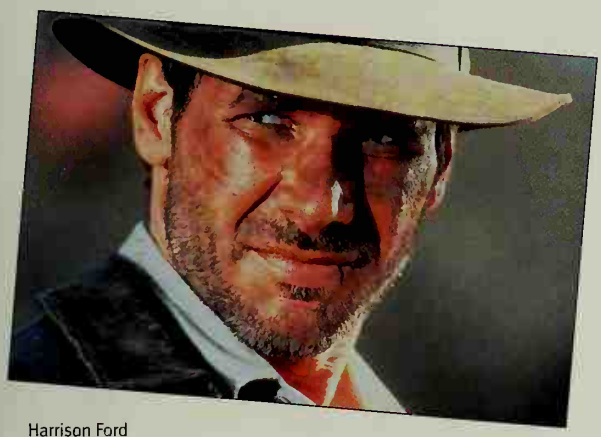


Mel Gibson
Braveheart, 1995



Robert De Niro
Cape Fear, 1991

Samuel L. Jackson
Pulp Fiction, 1994



Harrison Ford
Raiders of the Lost Ark, 1981

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Terminator 2: Judgment Day, 1991

Rita Hayworth
Gilda, 1946

Bette Davis
All About Eve, 1950

Mae West
She Done Him Wrong, 1933

Joan Crawford
Sudden Fear, 1952

Katharine Hepburn
Woman of the Year, 1942

Audrey Hepburn
Breakfast at Tiffany's, 1961

Marilyn Monroe
How to Marry a Millionaire, 1953

Ingrid Bergman
Casablanca, 1942

Grace Kelly
MGM publicity photo, 1956

Natalie Wood
Gypsy, 1962

Doris Day
By the Light of the Silvery Moon, 1953

Joanne Woodward
The Three Faces of Eve, 1957

Sophia Loren
1961

Meryl Streep
The French Lieutenant's Woman, 1981

Mia Farrow
Rosemary's Baby, 1968

Goldie Hawn
Private Benjamin, 1980

Jodie Foster
Nell, 1994

Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis
Thelma & Louise, 1991

Julia Roberts
Pretty Woman, 1990

Angela Bassett
What's Love Got to Do With It, 1993

Gwyneth Paltrow
Shakespeare in Love, 1998

Faye Dunaway
Chinatown, 1974

Sharon Stone
Basic Instinct, 1992

Kim Basinger
L.A. Confidential, 1997

Michelle Pfeiffer
Dangerous Liaisons, 1988

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